ENTERTAINMENT / F4 SPORTS / A23

The indie roundtable talks

RP's Iliam Central settles for 2nd in World Series

BUSINESS / B1

Local investors lost P6.4 billion in forex scam

Is this week your chance to say YES?

Market crash hits big, small investors alike

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

WA FAMILIAR MARKET SIZE REALLY doesn't matter.

All investors, whether big or small, suffer in a free-falling market.

Edwin Bacani, 40, a small investor in the local stock market, has been buying and

MARKET B4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, August 28, 2007 ++ Vol. 22 / No. 211

He gambled on credit time bomb and won

ALL THROUGH LAST YEAR, JOE

Ritchie saw the signs of a rapidly slide in rating American housing market—rotten mortgages, rising delinquencies and more homes falling into foreclosure. And with $100 million in assets at his hedge fund, Dalrada Capital, he was in a position to do something about it.

SEE GAMBLER A4

Bishop rues waste of lives in Basilan

"I DO NOT KNOW the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death. They died unquestioning." These words of the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur may well refer to these five young military officers also in a failure with the Abu Sayyaf bandits on Saturday.

But AFP says war will go on

By Nikko Dizon, Christian V. Esguerra, Christine O. Avendaño and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

LAMENTING THE LATEST military deaths in Basilan as senseless and a waste of lives, Church and congressional leaders yesterday added their voices to the mounting clamor for an end to the government's all-out offensive against the Abu Sayyaf, but the military vowed to pursue the attacks without letup.

A nationwide organization of Catholic religious orders...the diocese.

BISHOP A10

15 Marines were 'sitting ducks' to Abu Sayyaf

By Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE 15 MARINES killed in the latest military debacle on Basilan island were on a test mission as part of their training in close quarters combat, and were ambushed down "like sitting ducks" by the Abu Sayyaf after ignoring their guides' advice on what road to follow, according to officials.

One of the officials said the Marines might have survived had they listened to their guide's instructions on how to approach the Abu Sayyaf hideout.

A source in army officers told the Inquirer the five junior officers and 10 enlisted personnel killed on Saturday were considered "students" of the Force Reconnaissance Company 158, Coy Class 131 who were completing their training in close quarters combat.

"It was just a test mission," said the Army officer, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitive position he holds.

This was confirmed by Task Force Thunder chief Brig. Gen. Juanito Ibarra, who said the soldiers were part of an Army company of eight men and an officer who were completing the course.

The military claimed it killed up to 41 Abu Sayyaf men in Saturday's fighting in the Basilan municipality of Tuburan Pekan.

Tuburan Pekan Mayor Joel Maramo,

CONTINUED A10

Is DepEd critic barking up the wrong tree?

By Fernando del Mundo

ANTONIO CALIPLO EO HAS DONE IT again.

On Aug. 13, the Department of Education critic put out a full-page ad to the Inquirer in blind assay as owners he had uncovered in DepEd's social studies textbooks published with Abdul Razir Binanting and seized the year to public elementary schools.

The blunders were so ludicrous and laughable they read like items in Mad magazine.

He also looked at the Emma Guidelines by the DepEd to correct the errors after some anonymous web defacement the leaflet to the Marian School in Quezon City, which he owns and serves as academic supervisor.

SCHOOL A4

EDUCATION IN CRISIS

Changes at top too often

By Beverly T. Rocinidad

(Second of two parts)

RECENT CHANGES IN THE CABINET have sparked speculation that a new secretary will be named to the Department of Education (DepEd), where critics say frequent leadership turnover accounts for the sad state of the country's education system.

Over the past six years under President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration, no one has stayed long enough at DepEd to do a thorough job of cleaning up a veritable Augean stables of Greek mythology.

"The DepEd needs continuing leadership," says Ilidio Soliman, a former social welfare secretary who joined a mass resignation in the Arroyo Cabinet during the "Hello Garci" controversy in 2005.

"Whoever is at the helm will not be able to do justice to the job if he or she stays for a short time," Soliman says.

Joel Lapus, named education secretary in August 2000, is the fifth person to head the DepEd since Ms Arroyo became President in 2001.

Rumors of yet another change in leadership have prompted a protest from the DepEd's National Employees Union (NEU).

NEU president Dominga B. Alidon suspects that the continuing controversy over over-filled textbooks and the alleged scandalous manner some publishing houses are currying printing contracts year in and year out are behind the rumors.

But in fact the textbook procurement

LEADERSHIP A4

NINOY REMEMBERED

A worker sprucens up the statue of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in Makati City ahead of the 24th anniversary of his assassination.

Chung To: A rising star changes course

MAGSAYSAY AWARDS

By DK Santos

CHUNG TO WAS ONLY 26 WHEN his investment bank in New York assigned him to Hong Kong to expand the Asia market. He was in his associate director of the firm's investment bank in Hong Kong—not a bad career move for this business graduate of Columbia University with a master's degree in East Asian Studies from Harvard.

He was definitely a young star on the rise. Little did Chung To know that his return to Hong Kong, his birthplace, would actually steer him toward an entirely new and

CHUNG TO A2

Chung To (far left), 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership, comforts children who had lost a parent to AIDS.

Hundreds pose naked on shrinking glacier

AUSTICH GLACIER, SWITZERLAND —Hundreds of people posed naked on Switzerland's shrinking Aletsch glacier on Saturday for US photographer Spencer Tunick as part of a Greenpeace campaign to raise awareness of global warming.

Tunick, perched on a ladder and su-

WORLDBRIEFS A2

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

CLOUD SEEDING RESTARTED

Despite 'Egay,' dry spell persists

By Tarra Quismundo

DESPITE THE HEAVY RAINS DUMPED BY TYPHOON "EGAY," THE dry spell still persists in some parts of the country, particularly Region II.

Thus, the Philippine Air Force has resumed cloud-seeding operations in the mountain-buffered region as the area remains in dire need of water.

The cloud seeding is expected to benefit the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino which had been spared the stormy weather brought over the rest of Luzon by successive typhoons Chedeng, Dodong and Egay.

The region is topographically rebuilt is dominated by towering peaks and mountain ranges has kept the abundant rains in neighboring provinces like La Union and Mountain Province from crossing over its boundaries.

The dry spell, however, has ended in Region 3, Cordillera Administrative Region, Region III and Metro Manila, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Pagasa said widespread rains would fall over extreme northern Luzon and the western section of northern and Central Luzon today.

Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon, aside from Isabela, will be partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms and thunderstorms.

Over the weekend, military reconnoiters were sent back to Cauayan, Isabela, after another monitors on the ground determined the need to resume cloud-seeding operations in the area, a pilot dispatched on the mission confirmed yesterday.

After a four-day layover at PAF headquarters at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, a seeding team flew back to Isabela on Saturday afternoon on board an FO22-C. Sources in the Department of Agriculture's request to continue unloading over Magat Dam.

"When we got here, the DA advised that we target clouds over Magat Dam. That's our concentration right now," said 1st Lt. Raoul Daet, co-pilot of the unloading plane that had been assigned to seed clouds over Isabela since last month.

The PAF unloading team, including two pilots, flight crew and weather officers, were sent back to Isabela as soon as the weather in Manila was clear enough for flight.

The team's blamed had been grounded at the Villamor while Egay brought inclement weather and poor visibility in the skies over Metro Manila and neighboring provinces.

The Cauayan team earlier completed close to 12 flights of cloud seeding operations from July 28 up to last week, when it had to suspend the unloading mission for a medical emergency flight in Manila.

"Most likely, we will finish by this week. But if there will still be requests, then we will continue," he said.

For every cloud-seeding sortie in cooperation, rainmakers must target towering cumulus clouds, the kind that are hard to come by in Isabela.

As this developed, an international peasant group, the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), and the militant farmers organization Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP) have appealed for global aid for countries ravaged by recent storms and floods.

In a joint statement, Rafah Fridas, APC Indian chair, noted that in the past few weeks thousands of peasants have been displaced by floods in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines.

He reported that in Northern India and Bangladesh, thousands of hectares of crops were destroyed by rains and were still submerged in floodwaters. With reports from *TJ Burgonio, and Jaclyn T. Mullet/Sr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

PANGPUSO in Malolos City remains flooded days after Egay left the country but, ironically, the sun may deliver water to those in need of the commodity after the typhoon. ALEX DAVID

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Antismuggling czar tags BOC men in smuggling

By Michael Lim Ubac

SOME OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES of the Bureau of Customs are involved in the smuggling of cars and other items via the country's low ports, according to Antonio Villar Jr., chief of the newly created Presidential anti-Smuggling Group.

Villar was asked to name names during a press conference yesterday but declined to do so, saying he was still in the process of "validating" the list of suspected protectors of smugglers.

He said the number, including BOC executives, could reach "more than 100 noteworthy."

Villar said President Macapagal-Arroyo had given the PSG the "green light" to investigate the BOC officials who were allegedly in cahoots with big-time smugglers.

Asked if the PSG was encroaching on the functions of the BOC, Villar said: "Why would I do that? I don't cross the PSAU if the was satisfied with the BOC?"

Last Thursday at the Subic Bay Freeport, 18 smuggled cars were crushed. The unprecedented move was described by Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales as a "confirmation process."

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the duties and the government has entrusted P50 million to marine peacemen and P20 million to cars.

However, the Department of Finance, the BOC and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) spared other smuggled luxury vehicles: Cadillacs Corvette, Lamborghini, a few Porsches, Audis and Cadillacs, which they earlier said they would destroy.

Of the 18 cars, only seven were luxury vehicles: a two-door Mitsubishi GTO, three BMW 325, one BMW 325, one Lincoln Navigator and one Chevrolet Emmaxx van. Also spared are SG Toyota Fortuna, one Toyota Caldina, two Honda Civics, one Nissan Sentra, Mazda and one Mitsubishi Virage.

During yesterday's press conference, Villar declined to comment on the reported 485 luxurious himself and Morales, but said: "Maraka one of us ...I mahuntuan ang [volunteers] smuggling."

Pressing to the reassurance between smugglers and BOC officials, Villar said cars and other smuggled items could not be taken out of the ports without the "signatures of BOC officials."

Since January, Villar said, the PSG was able to seize P300 million worth of smuggled items. He also admitted that the government's annual losses due to smuggling could reach P58-billion.

Reports washing his office showed that corrupt BOC officials were paid P5,000 for a 20-footer container and P10,000 for a 40-footer container that they allowed through.

Villar also defended the decision of the BOC, DOF and Subic Freeport officials not to destroy the Ferrari, Lamborghini, the Porsches and 14 other luxury cars.

"It was said last week that the government had "to handle the legal processes" first. He added that the owners intended to send themselves if legal processes recover the luxury cars.

Villar disclosed he received several letters asking Mr. to "use to reconsider his decision ordering the destruction of the luxury cars and instead to auction them off, so that the proceeds could be donated to charitable institutions like General Kalinga.

2 lawmakers to share vital House committee leadership

By TJ Burgonio

REPRESENTATIVES JOSEL LACSON and Isaac Go will rule the House appropriations committee under a term-sharing agreement, Speaker Jose de Venecia said yesterday.

De Venecia said Lagman of the first district of Albay and Cua of the lone district of Quirino were nominated by their respective parties, Lakas and Bangi, to head the most powerful committee in the House of Representatives.

"When I say they will be elected appropriations chair, they will be elected one after the other," De Venecia said in a statement.

The Speaker said the two senior lawmakers had agreed to serve one after the other, with Lagman possibly serving the first 18 months.

The appropriations committee was one of the few remaining key committees that had not been named.

De Venecia's announcement comes one week before Malacañang is expected to submit the P1.3-trillion national budget for 2008 to Congress for approval.

De Venecia said the record performance of appropriations bill, the largest in the nation's history, would have substantial capital expenditures that would be "essential in uplifting our people from poverty and lifting the economy."

He described both Lagman and Cua as highly regarded and thoroughly competent.

While drawn heading the appropriations panel, the House will be ready to tackle the national budget, which has the highest priority to the agenda of Congress," he said.

In the last Congress, Lacsons first Rep. Rolando Andaya and 4th Rep. Jose Solis chaired the appropriations committee on a rotating basis. Andaya was subsequently appointed budget secretary while Solis became President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff.

The House majority coalition be-

gan reorganizing the lower chamber a week after De Venecia was elected Speaker on July 23.

Minority Deputy Floor Leader Rainier Cruz appointed chair of the committee on accounts, succeeding Rep. Ezequiel Javier was named chair of the committee on ways and means, and Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra was appointed head of the agriculture committee, among others.

After a House member named objections, Majority Floor Leader Arthur Defensor explained that a committee had been formed to consult with the lawmakers on committee chairmanships and vice chairmanships. He said the arrangements were partial and not subject to a vote in the plenary.

The election of the President's son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, and brother-in-law, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, as chairs of the committee on energy and natural resources, respectively, also drew criticism.

Ex-governor can't shake graft charge

A FORMER GOVERNOR OF DAVAO DEL Sur will stand trial for graft in the fraudulent loan in connection with a complaint filed by a provincial treasurer in 2004.

The graft case against Rodolfo Mafia stemmed from a complaint filed by then provincial treasurer Nestor de Laja.

Mafia said he dismissed Laja after investigation showed he had misappropriated contributions and loan payments to the Government Service Insurance System made by provincial government officials and employees.

In seeking dismissal of the case filed against him by the Ombudsman three years ago, Mafia maintained that his dismissal of Laja was not a prohibited act but his obligation as a chief executive.

He said Laja had been found guilty of administrative offenses by the Ombudsman for Mindanao and was dismissed from the government service while several criminal cases were pending against him in different divisions of the Sandiganbayan.

But the antigraft court junked Mafia's motion, pointing out it had found "sufficient basis" for the issuance of probable cause.

It pointed out the ex-governor had also been charged with defrauding Laja in his office and withholding a year's worth of his salary, disregarding an order of reinstatement issued by the Bureau of Local Government Finance under the Department of Finance.

For depriving Laja of his job and wages amounting to more than P297,000, Mafia supposedly gave unwarranted benefits to his co-respondent, Abdulmanee Hadjisila, who was appointed in Laja's place.

Jocelyn R. Uy

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Business Can be simple

Market crash hits big, small investors alike

From page B1

selling stocks the past 10 years.

Small investors are those who buy shares worth P25,000 or less in an initial public or secondary stock offering, according to investment bankers. They account for about 10 percent of the Philippine Stock Exchange's total trades.

Bacani recalls how he survived market crashes during the short scandals that hounded the Estrada administration, which led to the impeachment and ouster of former President Joseph Estrada.

Losing money faster now

"I have experienced losing before. Now, I'm losing again, but the speed of losing money is faster now," Bacani says.

Over the past 10 years, Bacani has invested from P800,000 to P1.5 million in both "blue chips" and "speculative" stocks. He made the biggest gain during the bull run in the first half of the year, growing his money as much as five times.

The recent free-fall in the stock market, however, was so alarming it led him to sell his investments at any price to cut his losses.

Savings wiped out

The market's fall has wiped out 10 years' worth of hard-earned savings, while the bet-its-all-on-the-stock-market, according to Bacani.

"A while ago, I was hoping for a correction but I'll go today if I can even recover P1.05,000 to P200,000," he says.

"I thought the comment, especially after the elections, was bullish. But what's happening now, it's a bitish correction. Now, I'm even wishing that the market would fall next week so I could feel relieved that when I sold, I sold at a good price," Bacani said, half in jest.

Confidence broken

No one is spared from a stock market's fall, whether you are a big or small investor, says online broker Citisecurities Corporation head Jose Consuelo Ibarra.

"All markets are getting bruises and the problem is affecting everybody. Confidence is broken and it will take a while before it returns. We can't quantify how much people are losing," Ibarra says.

Joseph Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc., says that quantifying the damage depends on how much money one has bet on the market.

"If you've invested 100 percent [of your money], whether you're a big or small investor, that is very painful. But if you just invested 10 percent of your income, whether or not you're a big or small player, then you get hurt 10 percent," Roxas said.

One measure of how much the market has fallen is to look at the value of stocks based on current prices multiplied by the total number of shares issued.

A trillion pesos lost

Since the stock market's peak on July 6, the total market value of all listed firms has declined by a whopping P1.25 trillion.

The market value of the 29 companies in the blue chip Philippine Stock Exchange Index (PSEi) has dropped by P790 billion.

Year to date, the PSEi lost 98.2 points, or 5.39 percent.

Since hitting the all-time high early last month, the stock index has shed a total of 927.88 points, or 23.92 percent.

Subprime mortgage woes

On Friday the stock market fell to its lowest level in almost eight months, as it continued to succumb to the weaknesses in global markets, hit badly by the US subprime problems.

The subprime mortgage sector provides home loans to people with poor credit histories.

Despite the market's steep fall of roughly more than 500 points in the past six trading days, sentiment about how far the market has hit bottom remains mixed among analysts.

"It's really hard to say. From the [technical] charts[, the latest breakdown has support at 3,800 but fundamentally, share prices are cheap. But the market is not following any of these leads. It's resource to follow Wall Street's lead. If New York stabilizes then so will are," says Francisco Ui-hoon, president of the Association of Securities Analysts of the Philippines (Asap).

"For me, we've seen the bottom. I think it will go up next week depending on the US because stocks now are so cheap," says Hakan broker Victor Vanbergen.

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SENSING THE DIFFERENCE

He gambled . . .

From page A1

In last October, as mortgage-backed bonds were still flying high, he bet $10 million that those bonds would plunge in value, using complex derivatives available to any institutional investor.

As his gamble began to pay off in the first months of 2007, Mulcahey, a New York-based money manager pleased the profits into ever bigger wagers that the mortgage crisis would worsen further, eventually risking some $60 million of the fund's money.

Mulcahey's flagship bond has since declined in value, even as the customer's market turmoil cost other investors billions of dollars, forced the closing of several major hedge funds and pushed the US stock market down 7 percent since mid-July.

This week, Mulcahey and his wife are heading to Paris for a vacation.

The extent of the turmoil has stunned much of Wall Street, but as Mulcahey's case makes clear, there were ample warning signs that a financial time bomb in the form of subprime mortgages was ticking quietly for months, if not years.

As far back as 2003, advocates for low-income homeowners had argued that mortgage providers were making loans to borrowers without regard to their ability to repay. Many could not even scrape together the money for a down payment and were being approved with little or no documentation of their income or assets.

"Until recently there was a lot of denial, but this is a big deal," said Byron R. Wien, a 40-year veteran of Wall Street who is now chief investment strategist at Blackrock Capital.

"Now the big questions is: Will this spill over into the broader economy?"

The answer to that question will be revealed over the coming months, but the cast of characters who missed signals, like the rise of delinquencies and foreclosures, is becoming easier to identify.

The characters include investment banks happy to sell risky but lucrative mortgage debt to hedge funds hungry for high investor payments, bond rating agencies willing to hype for the best in the housing market and provide sterling credit appraisals to debt issuers, and subprime mortgage brokers addicted to high sales volumes.

What is more, some of those players now find themselves in a dual role as both creditor and victim, like the legions of individual borrowers who were convinced that their homes could only keep rising in value and were confident that they could afford to refinance the biggest mortgage payments.

New York Times News Service

Chung To: A rising star changes course

From page A1

more fulfilling focus in life.

Chung and his family migrated to the United States and settled in San Francisco in 1982 when he was 15. It was a time when people were dying from a mysterious disease and San Francisco was one of the badly hit areas. Chung recalls that the disease was on the front pages of newspapers almost every day and that people referred to it as the "gay cancer" since most of the victims were gay.

He was deeply moved when his own high school math teacher died of the disease, identified here as AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) that was caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). While still a student, Chung joined volunteer groups that raised funds for AIDS. He repeatedly lost several friends to AIDS while working in New York.

Ignorance of AIDS

In Hong Kong, Chung found many of the homosexual community ignorant of AIDS. Although about a third of HIV/AIDS cases were gay men, unprotected sex among them was very common. He realized that the situation was not any better in rural areas in mainland China where people thought AIDS and AIDS were inflicted on them.

Concerned that an AIDS epidemic similar to what he saw in San Francisco could hit highly populated China, Chung and some friends put up the Chi Heng (meaning "wisdom to arise") Foundation.

The Chi Heng Foundation (CHF) aimed at educating the Chinese on HIV and AIDS to protect high-risk groups, including homosexuals and sex workers. The foundation enforced the help of hundred amateurs and volunteers to distribute condoms and safe sex kits to gay bars and clubs.

The foundation also set up a help line that delivered fresh and factual information about HIV and AIDS, linked victims to doctors, and offered counseling and legal advice. Eventually, it reached the gay community through the Internet. Its operations started in Hong Kong and later expanded to the mainland.

By 1999, Chung decided his time between his job at an investment bank and his CHF operations in Hong Kong and the CHF Center of his study in villages in 2001, someone advised him to look into the AIDS situation in central China where poor farmers had been selling their blood to many unscrupulous buyers. They also contracted AIDS due to the unhygienic methods used in blood collections.

Chung and CHF volunteers visited several villages in central China and found areas where, according to the South China Morning Post, "young children have had to grow up too fast and take on the duties and responsibilities of adulthood."

Whole generation lost

There are villages where a whole generation—the most sexual active and children are looked after by their elderly, emotionally devastated grandparents."

An entry in Chung's diary: "In one of the villages, out of tens of families almost every family had someone with AIDS. In flesh and ashen houses lay groaning frail critically ill AIDS patients. They, who should be in their prime yet have to struggle with death daily, unable to care for their very young children, become old and ailing like a candle flickering in the wind."

Stating that the AIDS victims were dying without medical attention, he wrote: "Admittedly death is frightening but dying with no dignity is even worse. Even though it was a hot summer day, our saw our last feel the chills."

An equally serious aftermath of the AIDS epidemics in the villages were the thousands of orphans, some of them HIV-positive.

In 2004, the Shanghai Daily cited a government report claiming over 60,000 AIDS orphans left victims as of 2003 and noted that experts estimated the actual number to be above 840,000.

Chung realized that the situation needed his full attention. He gave up his job at the bank and launched AIDS Orphans Project.

He now devotes all his time to CHF. When he is not raising funds, he is in the villages attending directly to the needs of victims and the orphans.

The CHF operates in the villages throughout central China, giving support to children who have lost at least one parent to AIDS or are living with an AIDS victim. The motive of here is take care of the children was carefully studied.

In the end, CHF chose to have the children live with grandparents or relatives within the same village and to attend regular village schools. Such a scheme was thought best to minimize the orphans' isolation.

Education expenses

The CHF pays for the education and living expenses of the children. Its largest aid project is in Shangcai county in Henan province where more than 3,000 children are given assistance. The foundation has extended its assistance to the children in the provinces of Anhui and Shandong as well.

Chung devised a procedure wherein the child's parent or relative advanced payment for the school fees and then presented the receipt to the CHF for reimbursement. What system ensured that funds for a child's education were not used for other purposes by the family.

Chung himself would go to the villages to distribute the scholarship funds, following or interacting with the children and to look into the academic records. He would give additional funds to those who would be in the top ten of their class.

Aside from scholarships, the CHF offers psychotherapy sessions to allow the children to express and eventually reconcile with their feelings on their experiences through drawings and essays.

The South China Morning Post relates the story of a boy whom Chung met during one of his village visits. The boy had lost his father to AIDS and his mother was now dying. With a disturbed face, the boy said: "I'll kill that blood head when I grow up," referring to those who expressed the blood bank in which poor farmers sold their blood.

Memory Book Project

Another CHF program is the Memory Book Project which encourages AIDS victims to put together their family trees, pictures of sisters, parents and most significant, photographs, letters, and other memorabilia for incorporation in a memory book.

With the memory book, the AIDS orphans have a record of their personal history and last words and wishes of their parents.

The CHF now operates in 14 cities in China, including Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen in Guangdong province. Its offices are manned by staff and volunteers, like retired investment banker Brenda Li. Among its donors and supporters are governments of the United States, The Global Fund, Clinton Foundation, Home Affairs Bureau in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong AIDS trust fund.

Private individuals who believe in Chung's work have likewise contributed themselves to the cause. In 2006, Patrick Hon and his wife Dora, helped raise HK$2 million for CHF. They hope to raise HK$3 million this year.

Latest award

Chung is the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership for "his passionate and compassionate response to AIDS in China and to the needs of its most vulnerable citizens."

This is the latest award accorded the man who now lives on his savings. Among his other awards are Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World, 2006 Junior Chamber International's 10 Most Outstanding Persons in China, 2006 (People's Republic Magazine), Rotary Club Centennial Award for Professional Excellence, 2005 (Rotary International), AIDS in Hong Kong 20 Years On-After Inspiring Persons, 2004 (Hong Kong Government Department of Health), and Ten Outstanding Young Persons of Hong Kong, 2003 (Junior Chamber of Hong Kong).

The Orphans Project started with 127 students; today, almost 4,000 children are under its fold. Some of the orphans have completed university education and have joined Chung on his visits to the villages.

Those graduates get further support from Chung who helps them look for work and arranges for their job training.

In an interview with the Shanghai Daily, Chung expresses no regret for giving up corporate life. "My former job can easily be filled by others but not my current one ... to really I'm quite proud of what I have been doing—before, now, and in the future."

This is one star over China whose light is no intense as ever.

Hundreds pose naked . . .

From page A1

ing a megaphone, directed nearly 400 volunteers from all over Europe and photographed them on a rocky outcrop overlooking the glacier, which is the largest in the Alps.

Later, he took pictures of the naked volunteers standing in groups on the mass of ice and lying down. Camera crews were staged as five different points on the glacier to take photographs.

Glaciers, which are sensitive to climate change, have been receding since the start of the industrial age, but the pace of shrinkage has accelerated in recent years.

The environmental group Greenpeace, which organized the shoot, said the aim was to "establish a symbolic relationship between the vulnerability of the melting glacier and the human body."

The Aletsch descends around the south side of the Jungfrau mountain in the Upper Rhone Valley.

The volunteers waited for several hours in the mountains en route the glacier before taking their clothes off briefly for the shoot in temperatures of around 10 degrees Celsius.

Alpine glaciers have lost about one-third of their length and half their volume over the past 150 years. The Aletsch in many has retreated by 115 metres in the last two years alone, according to Greenpeace.

Switch has staged many nude photo shoots in cities across the world, from Newcastle, Britain, to Mexico City, where a record 16,000 people took off their clothes in the Mexican capital's Zocalo Square in May.

Speaking to Geneva's Le Temps newspaper in an interview published before the shoot on Saturday, Switch said his photographs were both works of art and political statements.

"I will try to treat the body as bare briefs. On an abstract level, as if they were flowers or stones. And on a more social level, to support their inalienable ability and humanity with regard to nature and the city and to remind people where we come from," he said.

Switzerland has about 1,600 glaciers and almost of them are losing ground.

If global warming continues unabated, most glaciers will disappear from the Alps by 2100, according to Greenpeace.

Reuters

Leadership changes at the top too frequent

From page A1

ment had been lowering cost because Lapus came in. Abdon says Lapus has instituted reforms in the procurement process and his accomplishments cannot be "overshadowed by these baseless accusations."

Mr Arroyo's appointment of Director General Romulo Neri of the National Economic and Development Authority (not Neri) as head of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) sparked rumors that this may lead to the appointment of an "education czar."

Neri was ostensibly shifted to CHED on a "special assignment" for six months to address a so-called "jobs-skills" mismatch—a situation where there's a glut of 800,000 available jobs, mainly in information, tourism and agribusiness, that over a million college graduates cannot fill.

Also fueling speculation was a new executive order issued last month, abolishing the National Coordinating Council for Education (NCCE) and replacing it with a presidential assistant. HE (E is the coordinating body for DepEd, CHED and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda).

The issuance of the order further fueled speculation on the supposed education overhaul with orders to whip the system into shape to meet the demands of globalization and address the "grim" generally depressing scores in Math, Science and English proficiency tests.

Lapus dismisses rumors

In a recent interview with business editors and reporters, Lapus dismissed talk that he was on his way out and instead discussed DepEd's effort to update textbooks in elementary and high schools—a process that takes place every five years.

The current cycle began in 2003—over a year before Lapus arrived at the DepEd—and was hinded by a P300-million loan from the World Bank. Controversy in the bidding behind the project, requiring judicial intervention following protests by the losing bidders, delaying it by one year.

Delivery of the first installment of textbooks in Filipino in Mathematics and Araling Panlipunan—social studies—from Grades 1 to 6 was made only beginning in January for use in the 2003-2004 school year.

"When I came in, I was in the hot seat immediately," recalls Lapus. "I didn't even know the transactions."

Unbundling

In a major attempt to sort out the mess, Lapus announced that he had initiated steps to "unbundle" the bidding process by holding separate tenders for textbook content, publishing and delivery—all previously rammed into a single package.

The process started in May with the save set of updated English books.

Under the Lapus plan, authors will submit teaching materials and manuals that will undergo a four-level examination—previously two stages—by DepEd evaluators consisting of staff and consultants.

He also plans to form an "oversight" panel, including representatives of each education agency, Go Gallo and the University of the Philippines, that will put an "institutional imprimatur" on the finished product.

"We're still sounding off people," he says, pinking limits to determine what ideas will work best.

Transparency

"We need transparency in the process," Lapus says.

Evaluators, who approved textbooks riddled with factual and conceptual errors, will be banned from the screening mechanisms.

Instead, teams will be called in a two-day session to get them to know the rules of the game and make them compete with old hands familiar with how the system works and are at a great advantage, allowing them to correct kids all the time.

Lapus says representatives of the World Bank will participate in the seminar.

"All bidding documents have to pass through the World Bank," he says. Printers will get a "tax abolition" from the author's share.

"The World Bank is not going to be party to hanky-panky," he says. "Their reputation is more important than that."

After a textbook has been selected, it will be given a copyright with the appropriate fees and it will be submitted to a bidding for publishing—the second stage in the unbundling process.

Smaller lots

To ensure participation of local printing houses, Lapus says "lots"—books for different grades—will be broken down into small amounts up to a maximum of P300 million.

"Bidders will have to prove capacity to print," he says. "There will be an examination of the publishers' track record and financial capability."

DepEd representatives will

LAPUS

be present at every stage of the print run to ensure that errors are immediately rectified once exposed. There will be a "sampling of production on quality," Lapus says. "Each production run will have to be cleared."

In the final stage, a vendor will be held for delivery of the textbooks—to do away with a problem that on several occasions in the recent past resulted in teaching materials arriving in DepEd warehouses undelivered.

One participant in a recent bidding offered to publish a book at even half its printing cost, confident that it will be at least—the product will not be delivered anyway, particularly in conflict-zone regions of the country, and no one will miss a book.

National concern

Lapus says he plans to mobilize civil society, nongovernment organizations, parents and local communities as part involved in the delivery and monitoring of the innovations. He also says he plans to get the leading newspaper firm Ayala Centro & Mayo to audit the process.

If the textbook controversy appears to be Lapus' main preoccupation, it is because it is now on the front burner—as is one that is central to the current failure to improve the quality of Philippine education.

Lapus, to date, has quietly addressed numerous other problems inherent in a huge bureaucracy such as the DepEd. He has centralized ten percent to finance of procurement and put into motion efforts in order to get things moving.

He is tweaking his basics trying to address the annual problems of shortages of classrooms and schools, desks, pushing the all important initiative to train and hire teachers.

Classrooms of are alarmingly high despite talk. Lapus is looking at strengthening vocational and technical skills training by enlisting 1,500 technical institutions from Tesda so that high school graduates could at least get a skills certificate that will enable them to become up productive in private companies.

Aptitude test

In January, Lapus initiated an aptitude examination for high students and parents in choosing career paths. He plans to help hammer out legislation that will reinstitute what used to be called the National College Entrance Examinations (NCEE) for graduating high schoolers. This, Lapus explains, is a key to a semblance of a screening mechanism.

Before the NCEE was dropped in 1992, those who aspired to become teachers had to place among the top 30 percent in test results, according to Lapus. "If you would see what most teachers are taking the entrance! They don't have Science and Math and they cannot speak English," he says.

The key is to get parents to accept that a college diploma is not the end all of education.

"There's no shame in Japan, Germany, Australia, that they have fewer college graduates than the Philippines. We have over a million college graduates. Nobody wants them. They don't have the skills," says Lapus.

'Front-loading'

A banker with a reputation as a crisis manager, the former banker compromises is talking about getting financial institutions and construction companies to invest in building schools and other material needs in those facilities.

Lapus also talks of issuing "education bonds" to overseas Filipino workers who otherwise would put in their money to such things as real estate and investments, with the bonds used for investing in the future of their country.

"Our problem is front loading," he says, referring to the need for financial schemes initial to meet the needs of the ever-burgeoning population and reversing that DepEd has a "good cash flow."

Every child born requires DepEd to prepare for tens of thousands of classrooms every year if the government is to maintain its present five basic education to everyone.

"We need all those classrooms now," he says. "We need radical solutions ... If it's business as usual, you will not catch up. There will be casualties every year." *With reports from Dona Quinsumbing, Cyril L. Bonalberan, Inquirer Research*

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Is DepEd critic barking up the wrong tree?

From page A1

Aina, the guide is of little help, in Go's opinion.

"I pronounced to compare it with my own 12-th grade (a list of errors and their corresponding corrections)," says Go, 56. "In many instances, what was already correct had inadvertently been made wrong."

Proof of the pudding

Go's detractors in the department say he is in his pay of personal issues in DepEd bidding—something he vehemently denies. Because the proof of the pudding is in the eating, however, the detractors submit to some—and all—the initiative Dr Go has found.

In his latest ad, Go made it a point to identify not only the textbooks but also their authors, most of them with Ph Ds and MAs included in their names. He had come up with similar ads in the past and paid for them out of his own funds, saying fighting the wrongs in the learning materials was a personal crusade.

Instructor authors are upbeat on Go.

"He's barking up the wrong tree," says one author, who does not wish to be identified because he does not have permission to speak from his publishers. He says the culprits are the DepEd evaluators—fearless consultants who approved the textbooks in the first place.

If the department is really determined to rectify errors, he says, the names of the evaluators and staff enlisted to conduct the evaluations should be known before releasing DepEd Chief stayed away from doing.

The printers will be re-exposed, online-issued and held accountable, this author says.

He also rebutted in a memo Go allegation that one textbook attempted to portray the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos in a good light in a "subversive history" memo, saying it is "a lie."

Sufficient to the learning competencies (lessons) by DepEd is a must to vary acceptance, no matter that standards are subjective and arbitrary.

He refers to a history book he and fellow teachers in the subject had submitted for screening in the controversial bidding in 2003.

Balangiga massacre

Evaluators rejected an account of the Balangiga massacre, where Filipino revolutionaries slaughtered American soldiers during the Philippine-American War, urging a bloody reprisal from US forces. They said it was too violent.

The author says 75 more clips of crime in the evenings are much more appalling.

An illustration of the use of water torture employed by US forces against the Filipino revolutionaries also was rejected by the screeners, saying what was needed was a photograph.

The author urged in parting the outrage of the so-called comfort women, are those during the Japanese occupation, in coming out and recounting their ordeal who was raised because it would create diplomatic ties between Tokyo and Manila and defame Filipino women.

Another example of the wide leeway given to the screeners is the story of a poor, young boy in Filipino that received a grade of zero. The rejection was particularly disheartening because the material was already being used in private schools.

Teaching assistant

What is more troubling is the fact that a member subsequently discovered that a DepEd evaluator was using a teaching assistant to go over the material he was hired and paid for as a consultant to scrutinize.

Local authors say that the government should shy away from having loans to finance the publishing of school textbooks, saying the DepEd might be beholden to donors to a point that inquisitorial facets of history are then distorted.

Vetting the product

"We should not allow international agencies to influence the writing of our books," says Sen. Edgardo Angara. "They are vetting the final product. They're trying to mold the Filipino mind."

Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, Ateneo de Manila University president, backs academic freedom in the controversy. Jesuit Lapus' plea to enlist his school in reviewing textbooks the department is publishing.

"We have told the DepEd that all one can do in the final vetting is to correct grammatical mistakes, at most," says Nebres.

"But it is not the place to make substantive errors anymore. That should have been done before the final decision on the textbooks. What we suggested was that he actually get experts with credibility early into the process."

Angara's lament

Angara laments Congress' scrapping 11 years ago of the government-owned International Bimebook Corp., which maintained a stable of writers that produced textbooks in almost all disciplines. The writers were recruited from the private sector.

"At that time, there was no complaint about palpable errors. No complaint about one company cornering the supply of textbooks," says Angara.

"We ought to restore that concept of a government corporation that would prevent the monstrous relations will happen again."

Go has offered to help solve the recurring textbook errors and issues with DepEd officials, if they agree that impartial observers are present.

"I want the children, the future of us all," he says in his newspaper ad. "It is time to make peace, to sit down and close the books."

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TROUBLED WATER NO MORE
Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) workers demolish shanties built along a creek on Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue (formerly Buendia Avenue) in Makati City yesterday as part of cleaning efforts to get local waterways flowing again to prevent flooding. Edwin Bacasmas

Comelec resets assessment

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTION (Comelec) rescheduled its election assessment conference to more people and individuals can participate, according to a Comelec official.

The conference was organized to find ways to improve the country's much-criticized election system.

Originally scheduled for today up to Wednesday, the Comelec approved a recommendation moving the conference dates to Sept. 10-12, according to Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez.

Jimenez said some 150 participants would attend the conference.

He said participating organizations would be allowed only one representative each.

"Therefore, the conference would be too big," Jimenez said yesterday in a phone interview.

Among those who have expressed interest in joining the conference are election watchdog Bantay Mustegal (Vigil), whose convenor include former Comelec Commissioner Mehol Sadain, and the National Youth Commission (NYC).

The Comelec is set to invite to the conference its critics like the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University, the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), various other election watchdogs and the media.

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Charges filed against 27 in alleged pyramid scam

By Tina C. Ramos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has filed charges against 27 officials and investors in Francovalue Investment, one of the alleged "fraud" pyramiding schemes proliferating on the Internet.

Charged with syndicated estafa before the Department of Justice were Michael Mansfield, chief financial officer; Bart Sandelman, risk management team leader; Rupert Benedict da Viana, investment team leader; Julia Rodriguez, international funding team leader; Hector Wilfred Godfrey, marketing and international affairs; and Fernando Munoz, customer service leader.

Also charged were Francovalue officers in the Asia-Pacific region. They were Roger Smith, the British chief operation officer of FX Investment in the Asia Pacific region; Henry Fong, the Singaporean system operation officer; Raymond Chua, Singaporean marketing officer and two persons identified only as Michelle and Mike, Filipino secretaries and collectors of money from investors.

The NBI also filed charges against at least 16 investors, including arrest of suspect Eleazard Castillo, who allegedly enticed others to put their money in Francovalue.

Castillo, 26, a native of Cabuyao, Ilocos Sur, allegedly one of the financial advisers of Francovalue, was arrested by NBI agents in Baguio City last month.

The case stemmed from the complaints of at least 15 investors who said they lost a total of $75,000 (roughly P3.3 million) in the spurious investment scheme.

Francovalue, which started operating in March, was believed to have gripped unsuspecting investors in the Philippines of P3 billion, the NBI said.

A Ponzi scheme is a fraudulent investment operation that involves paying abnormally high returns to investors out of the money raised from new investors, rather than from profits generated by any real business.

The respondents allegedly lured unsuspecting victims to its website http://www.francovalue.biz and http://francbiz.com.

Investors were asked to invest $1,000 to Francovalue and $10,000 in dreadchiefs.com with a promise to double their money in 22 days.

They were promised daily interest of 3.5 percent or 840 (which they could encash through an Internet-to-bank transaction). An additional 10-percent commission as "referral fee" was also promised for every new investor recruited.

American killed in Batangas

CAMP VICENTE Lim, Laguna—A 66-year-old American was stabbed dead last Sunday night by suspected robbers at his resort in Nasugbu, Batangas, the police reported.

Supt. Jojo Pamida, Nasugbu police chief, identified the victim as Harold Adams of New Jersey.

Pamida said Adams' Filipina wife, Serafica Toledo-Adams, discovered the bloodied body of her husband in their house at Maligaya Beach Resort.

Pamida said police were looking at robbery as the motive after the wife told investigators money and valuables were missing from their room. Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Labor department to teach OFWs how to invest their funds

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND Employment said over the weekend there was a need to teach returning overseas Filipino workers and the families of those OFWs who were abroad how to invest their dollar earnings.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said the National Reintegration Center for OFWs, a newly created DOLE agency, would be doing the rounds of the provinces to reach OFWs and their families, among others, how they could engage in livelihoods and small and medium enterprises using their earnings.

"We are still in the advocacy stage and we're now increasing our awareness drive so that our operations can go full blast by December," Brion said in an interview.

Brion spoke Friday at a forum at the SEDCO office in Manila, where stakeholders discussed ways to promote a culture of savings and investment for OFWs and their families.

Savings and investment schemes were part of the reintegration program for OFWs that DOLE launched in March to bridge the gap between overseas employment and the achievement of development goals.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) chief Rolando Brupo said President Macapagal-Arroyo recently gave P330 million to the National Livelihood Support Fund to be utilized exclusively for OFWs.

Through loans, investment seminars and entrepreneurship training, Brupo said the government has since extended returning OFWs or their families in saving up more than 130 businesses.

Many studies have shown that migrants' remittances are primarily spent on consumption and daily maintenance.

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OFW denies kidnap tale

By Cynthia D. Balana

AN OVERSEAS FILIpino worker who had worked on the reconstruction of the US Embassy building in Baghdad has denied the Filipino workers brought to Iraq by a Kuwaiti firm were kidnapped and forced to work in the war-torn country.

Speaking on Vice President Noli de Castro's radio program "Ibon sa Iyo Bayan" Saturday, Johnny Barbosa disputed the claims of Ruel Mayberry, an American, before the US Congress on July 26 that 51 unsuspecting Filipinos were kidnapped and smuggled into Iraq and compelled to work by Abir Kuwaiti, the construction firm contracted by the US, under highly unsafe conditions.

In his testimony, Mayberry said he had accompanied 51 OFWs from Kuwait to Iraq and that while at the Kuwait airport, he received the clearance on the tickets of the Filipinos was Dubai.

Barbosa, who was with Mayberry's group, said there were only 41 passengers, 11 of them Filipinos, who were flown on First Kuwaiti's private jet to Iraq.

Barbosa said the Filipinos knew their destination was Iraq because their work contracts were already stamped in Kuwait.

"It's not true that we were forced and nobody was, even planning while we were aboard the plane," Barbosa told De Castro, who is also presidential adviser on OFWs.

According to Barbosa, he had previously worked in Iraq for 1½ months as an electrician.

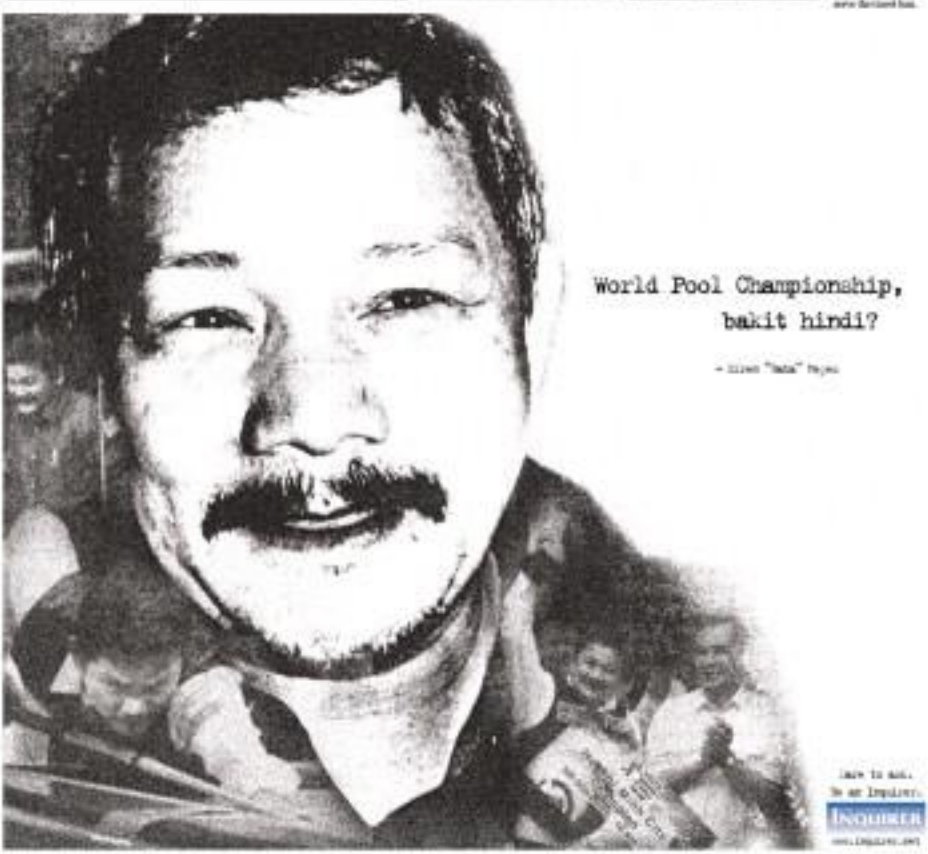
On his second trip, he worked at the embassy construction site but only for 45 days because he suffered a stroke. He later left for the Philippines.

Asked by De Castro about their working conditions in Iraq, Barbosa said in Filipino, "Ok sana maayos kung ayaw, Ruel was enough. In fact, Filipinos there are the most popular because we are hardworking."

He recalled that there were about 1,000 Filipinos working in the Green Zone in Iraq which is heavily guarded by US security forces.

De Castro said the government would no allow First Kuwaiti's local contract for violating the travel ban.

He said the Department of Foreign Affairs should negotiate with the government of Kuwait, including First Kuwaiti, to observe the travel ban.



Patients can't believe young man is a doctor

At 23, Adrian Paul Rabe makes his rounds after passing the recent medical board exam

By Yolanda Scotto-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

MANGALDAN, PANGASINAN—He's no Boogie Hoover, the fictional nostalgic doctor to the popular 90s sitcom that has achieved cult status. But Rabe makes his rounds at the Philippine General Hospital, he gets questioning looks from patients.

"Are you really a doctor?" some would ask.

The humble Rabe, a native of this town, was barely out of his teens when he started out as a medical clerk and intern at the PGH.

At 23, he is the youngest member of Class 2007 of the University of the Philippines' seven-year integrated Liberal Arts-Medicine (matatawag) program. He passed the medical licensure examination this month.

The fast-tracked program allows high-achieving students to be already admitted to the UP College of Medicine.

Mature for his age

Rabe says that of the original 60 members of his class in the integrated program, 15 graduated in April. The 37 were also among the 140 board passers from the UP College of Medicine this year.

RABE

Rabe turned 23 on Aug. 17, the day after the medical board exam results were released. He says he does not mind when patients express doubts after they learn his age.

He tells them they have nothing to worry about because, although he is young, he knows what he is doing.

"It's an opportunity to be here at a young age. I'm just younger than others, not special at all," says Rabe, who plans to take his residency in PGH, specializing in internal medicine, "most probably cardiology."

Interested Hoo E, class president, says Rabe may be the youngest in their class, but he is "smart, knowledgeable and very mature for his age."

Growing up in Kuwait

Rabe says his experiences as a boy helped make him a problem solver and responsible young man.

When he was young, his family lived in Kuwait. His father, Wee, an engineer, was a contract worker while his mother, Erminda, also an engineer, took care of their five young children.

He was 6 years old when the Gulf War broke out in August 1990 and the family decided to return to the Philippines.

"As we drove to Jordan, we were stopped by the military and my father was separated from us. We were taken to a desert camp where there were no toilets and we had to do it in the desert. We stayed there for seven weeks," Rabe says.

Back in the Philippines

"It was difficult because it was only my mother who took care of us and we had no idea where my father was. But she was very strong and she told us we would see him soon," he adds.

They were back in the Philippines in September 1990. His father arrived a week later. The family decided to settle in this town and start a photo studio and developing business.

"I don't belong to an affluent family. I guess my experiences during the war, in the desert, made me more tolerant and caring," Rabe says.

The patients who go to the PGH are (mostly) poor, sometimes they are sidetrope and smelly. Many of them are dying and we can only give them palliative medical care. Most of the time, my classmates would ask me to calm over [the case] of those patients because they know I am sensitive (tuloson) and I can keep a happy face," he says.

Independence

His mother says Rabe learned to stand up and walk on his own before he turned one.

At 3, he was reading the labels on milk cartons and, later, Bible stories (his parents are Jehovah's Witnesses).

His mother says Rabe would have when she would rent his older siblings.

"That was how he learned how to read and write," she says.

Accelerated

When they returned to the Philippines, his mother enrolled Rabe, then 6, at the Cherished Moments Montessori School in Mangaldan.

At first he was in a pre-school since that because he could already read and write, he was "accelerated" to Grade 1 after only a month.

He was always at the top of his class, graduating valedictorian in high school.

Debating team, badminton

Rabe says he initially resisted to take up architecture but the UP College Admissions Test application form had an item asking the applicant if he wanted to apply for the shortened medical course.

It was his brother, Mark, a UP law graduate, who told him to try out for the program.

Rabe took his advice and easailed fourth in the entrance examination and interview for the last time.

Apart from medicine, Rabe devotes his time to other interests like debating and sports.

He was titled Bar Ahtd best speaker during the Ateneo University-wide Debating Championship held in Singapore in May. He was also a member of his class basketball team.

Senate to probe nurses' recruiter

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SENATE WILL INQUIRE into a local affiliate of a New York-based recruitment firm with alleged Malacañang links due to repeated abuses in the hiring of Filipino nurses for jobs in the United States.

Sen. Franklin Drilon filed on Aug. 13 Senate Resolution 72 directing the appropriate committees of Senate Parliamentarians agency as well as the government's indifference to the plight of 20 Filipino nurses allegedly victimized by the company.

"The lack of sanctions despite widespread and recurring violations by this recruitment agency has emboldened the said agency to continue its violation of our laws to the detriment of our nurses, who in their desire to have a brighter future for themselves and their families are pursuing the American Dream," Lacson said.

Lacson said the 20 nurses were lured by Sorsosa in 2004 and 2005 by representing itself as a direct-hire agency catering to nursing facilities in New York, offering competitive salaries of up to $35 an hour, medical coverage, orientation and housing allowances, free malpractice insurance, free airfare from Manila to New York and generous night differentials.

But when the nurses actually arrived in New York, Sorsosa-not mentioned in the contracts-but also named three new entities: Sors Care LLC and its Prestige Nursing Employment Agency, ConSentosa Services, in their violation of the contract," Lacson said.

The Senate probe will also look into the alleged interference by Malacañang in the case filed by the 20 nurses against Sorsosa whose license was suspended by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) on May 24 last year.

Upon the prodding of Sorsosa, Sen. Charles Schumer (Democrat-NY) wrote a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo last year to look into the brewing court battle with the Filipino nurses and to meet with officials of the recruitment agency.

The President tapped then Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor to meet with the Sorsosa officials and the POEA officials of the suspension order after just two weeks.

Sen. Ignatius Pimentel Jr. accused Defensor of being Sorsosa's man but the latter denied that the government was interfering in the case and he was merely following up on the status of the case.

"The Philippine government agencies showed their indifference in protecting the rights of Filipino health professionals abroad by not acting on the violations," Lacson said.

Bishop rues waste of lives in Basilan

From page A1

tion of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP)—condemned the government's "eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth" response to the killing and beheading of the soldiers.

The AMRSP urged the government "to persevere in its resolve to continue dialogue and peace negotiations despite the pressure for revenge over the current bloodshed."

Basilan's Catholic bishop Martin Jumoad deplored the deaths of 11 soldiers in the weekend fighting in Basilan as "a waste life" and said he was angered by it.

The 59-strong "Mindanao bloc" in the House of Representatives joined in the clamor.

In a series of meetings, the Caucus of Mindanao Representatives agreed to support only "selective operations" targeting only members of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, according to Rep. Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro.

The Mindanao lawmakers demanded to throw their support behind the ₱1 billion "mini Marshall plan" floated by Speaker Jose de Venecia to rebuild areas ravaged by the decades-old conflict.

"The current violence in Mindanao will not address the root causes of the problem," Rodriguez, one of the main organizers of the bloc, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman, a native of Basilan, expressed concern over the plight of civilians caught in the middle of the conflict.

Rodriguez said a long-term solution should involve the establishment of effective livelihood and infrastructure projects, on top of a comprehensive education program.

Bishop Jumoad grieved at the continued bloodletting.

"I am very very sad and frustrated. It's very frustrating when you really work for peace and wage for reconciliation and then, here we go again, there are a lot of killings," the bishop said over the Church radio Radio Veritas.

"I can't help it. I was frustrated last night, really. I'm very sorry for those who died, a waste of life. I cannot express my sentiments this time. What I feel is frustration and I am angry," Jumoad said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Jumoad said the government should consider extending livelihood and reintegration education as the "concept of peace" to the young and old of Basilan to help build lasting peace in the province.

In a press statement, the AMRSP questioned the government's equally "violent response" to the criminal acts of the Abu Sayyaf.

"The killing of the soldiers and the beheading of some are truly abhorrent acts. But why should we follow the way of violence, resorting to similarly abhorrent acts in order to correct violence?" the group said.

Despite the heavy losses it had suffered, the military said it would press on in pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf Group.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. ordered troops down in Basilan to "keep the momentum" and to search for and engage the ASG.

Esperon expressed sadness over the deaths. He said he would personally visit the front after its Saturday's military raid on the enemy's camp in Lingkuan Pakan, and condoled with their families.

Killed were Lieutenants Ludwig Gallardo, Jeffrey Lorenzo, Eugene Machico Pineda, Rodolfo Noel Soriano and Nathaniel Fermoso and Privates First Class Ibrahim Bayot, Reynaldo Pedroso, Rusty Basawes, Julius Jore, Marcial Tayabas Jr., Danilo Vergara, Michael Anique, Ursolo Torres, Virgilio Domingo III and Edil Labarez. The Air Force pilot was 2nd Lt. Camille Delamide.

"The direction is for the troops is to continue their operations ... the objective is to destroy the Abu Sayyaf," Esperon told reporters in a phone interview.

"The (soldiers') sacrifices will not be in vain because we will follow this up," he said.

Esperon said he was "very satisfied" with the killing by soldiers of 62 ASG bandits, including their commander Furuji Indama, his brother Umair and Alimar Amirul.

Indama was one of the Abu Sayyaf members allegedly behind the beheading of 14 of 14 Marine soldiers killed in the July 14 ambush in Basilan.

Esperon also said one of the 10th ASG recovered from the Abu Sayyaf camp raid on Saturday belonged to one of the beheaded Marines.

15 Marines were 'sitting ducks' . . .

From page A1

who joined the operation with 40 militiamen, said the 15 Marines would all still be alive "if they heeded their commanders who told them to observe their guides."

Marcelino said there is militia support among Hilindoan, who was wounded in the clash, and another militiaman had advised the junior officers not to take the lone ground leading to their targets, but a different road instead.

"What happened was they followed an easier route on low ground," Marcelino said. "The Abu Sayyaf positions almost 20 meters high from them ... Aqua parang ibon silang pinatong-pratice shooting ng mga bandido (as they were like sitting ducks that became shooting practice targets of the bandits)," Marcelino said.

He said that Abu Sayyaf knows were on a cliff that put them at a vantage point to shoot at the soldiers below.

"If they had followed their guide, they would have surprised the enemy, who had their backs turned to them," Marcelino said.

Marcelino said the mission was handled before Thursday and the troops were supposed to jump off at dawn Thursday. But owing to the delayed arrival of a battalion of soldiers, the Marines moved only on Friday night.

He said the junior officers and their respective teams were to be the "main layer" attackers, while the Special Forces platoons, his men of two militia companies and other units served as covered and third layers of the attack.

"The problem was that this first layer was made up purely of young officers. Marines ang dapat sa mauunang (This (should) and before). They did not follow the instructions of their commanders and went ahead of their guides among the Cafajo," the mayor said.

The ill-fated Class 13 was led by Lt. Ludwig Gallardo, who was among those killed.

Sakban said the soldiers were single, meeting the mission as part of the offensive against those involved in the July 14 beheading-massacre of 14 Marines in Al Barka town.

Sakban said they were able to locate the "beheaders" in their base in Aldo Kaselkan in the village of Matipluong in Ustaya Pakan town.

"So we decided to conduct an all-out offensive using the Force Recon Class 13 as main effort, backed up by special operations platoons," he said.

But Sakban admitted that the Abu Sayyaf group was a mountain lion.

"It was a fortress," he said.

During the firefight, the soldiers had to clear bunkers and foxholes where the bandits were hobbled up, according to Sakban.

"I guess during this firefight they came in close quarters battle with the enemy, which was fighting inside the ASG camp," he said.

Mayor Hataman said all the Dos Marine officers were already dead before 7 a.m. Saturday.

"They were not able to enter the ASG camp, only the second and third layers did. Some were there to retrieve the dead, while the others continued with the fighting. That's what really happened," Mataman said.

The military earlier claimed those killed had been able to take over the camp.

Mataman said the fighting lasted until 3 p.m.

"Pinatay silang lahat (the soldiers should listen to their guides)," he said.

Sakban said he was taking full responsibility for what happened.

"There are no excuses. We accomplished our mission. I will take responsibility for whatever my men did and whatever they failed to do," he said.

"We provided everything (the time). There were no more miscommunication, no strong frequency, no faulty mortars," Sakban said, referring to reported military lapses which led to the July 14 ambush in Basilan, in which 14 Marines were killed, 10 of whom were beheaded.

"We did our best. Our men fought gallantly and we accomplished our mission," Sakban stressed.

But Sakban admitted he was also sad over what happened because he lost "good soldiers that were very veterans."

He said Sakban's men among the soldiers responsible for the killing of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani in Lobo Hills in the Isabela town last year.

The Class 13 soldiers were also involved in the killing of Abtah Tilao, alias Abu Solaiman, the Abu Sayyaf spokesperson, in Tumbangan in Al Barka.

"Unfortunately, we pay dearly for getting the beheaders of the Marines," Sakban said.

MG-520 grounded

The Philippine Air Force has grounded its fleet of attack helicopters as it probed Saturday's deadly crash of an MG-520 gunship during the nine-hour battle with the Abu Sayyaf.

Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said he had ordered the grounding of the 17 remaining MG-520s while the AFP was looking into the cause of the crash.

The crash claimed the life of 2nd Lt. Claudio Delamide, the first casualty of the Air Force since the government began its full-blown attack on the Jamil group in the south.

Esperon said that mid-flight, the gunship's fuel filter light on the instrument panel lit up, indicating there might have been a problem in the fuel line, Esperon said.

He denied the chopper was killed by enemy fire.

Esperon said the helicopter tried to reach an island across enemy territory but failed to reach the shore, crashing into shallow waters.

Col. Reynaldo Ramirez, commander of the 3rd Tactical Operations Wing of the PAF, said the helicopter suffered mechanical failure at a height of 3,000 feet "while they were about to return to base after delivering aerial fire support to the troops."

He said although Delamide died, they were his by enemy fire. It was mechanical trouble as the pilots decided to do a beached landing," Ramirez said. **With a report from** Reyes Quintanilla

DOJ reinstates gun raps vs Lanao mayor, 3 others

By Leila B. Salaverria

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ has ordered the reinstatement of illegal possession of firearms charges against the mayor of Lanao del Sur town and three others, as well as obstruction of justice and falsification of documents charges against three policemen.

Gonzalez reversed the resolution of Lanao del Sur Provincial Prosecutor Pacasum Macabando that overturned the findings of two state prosecutors of probable cause to charge Lanao Mayor Amenoda Mangotara, Bukay Mantar, Ali Ryan Hashim and Bandang Mamona Mopa with illegal possession of firearms.

They were allegedly caught with four unlicensed firearms at a checkpoint by members of the Philippine Marines in Sagonsican, Lanao del Sur, on July 29, 2006.

State prosecutors Leo Dacera and Jam Pedro Sawera, who were designated acting provincial prosecutors of Lanao del Sur, had also recommended that Sgt. Gani Pamansia Insia, SPO1 Benjamin Tamayo Jr. and SPO1 Alphyan Zacaria be charged with obstruction of justice and falsification of documents for allegedly producing spurious memorandum receipts in order to remove the confiscated firearms.

Reinvestigation

The charges against the seven respondents were initially filed in the Shariat Regional Trial Court early this year, but the judge later ordered a reinvestigation of the charges.

Macabando conducted the reinvestigation and reversed the findings of probable cause against the accused. The complainant, the PNP Intelligence Group, then appealed Macabando's findings with Gonzalez.

In ordering the reinstatement of the charges, Gonzalez said Macabando had no authority to conduct a reinvestigation and to overturn the findings of the state prosecutors.

He also said there was enough evidence to support the finding of probable cause against the respondents.

"Verily, the evidence against respondents to these cases exceeds the standard for probable cause required in preliminary investigations ... This is especially true as the said evidence has remained uncontroverted. Also, a void and unauthorized reinvestigation cannot cocure the finding of probable cause by the duly authorized prosecutors assigned for this purpose," Gonzalez said in the Aug. 14 resolution.

Gonzalez said Dacera and Saweza had been designated acting provincial prosecutors of Lanao del Sur to handle the cases before the judge ordered the reinvestigation. Thus, Macabando did not have jurisdiction and control over the two cases anymore and should have forwarded the judge's order to the two state prosecutors.

Dacera and Saweza were assigned to handle the cases after the PNP-IG requested the transfer of the preliminary investigation to the Department of Justice in Manila allegedly because of the failure of the local police to complete the investigation.

Even before the issuance of the judge's order for reinvestigation, Gonzalez noted that Macabando had usurped the powers of Dacera and Saweza when he endorsed to another regional trial court judge the approval of the respondents' bail.

The justice secretary also said there was no need for a reinvestigation of the case because the respondents were given several chances to answer the complaints against them, including granting their requests for extensions of time to submit their counteraffidavits.

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Medical tourism meet set

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism will host the 2nd Annual International Medical Travel Conference (IMTC) for buyers and sellers in the international medical tourism field to strengthen the country's efforts at being a major player in the multibillion-dollar industry.

To be held on Nov. 20-23, the DOT thus seeks hopes to drum up popular support for the conference.

"The Philippines has some of the best hospitals and specialists in the region offering world-class expertise and state-of-the-art facilities at a fraction of the cost in industrialized countries," said Angel Ramos Reguel, president of the National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (Natas), which will package medical tours, surrounding tourism and post-event visits in separate clinics for the IMTC.

The IMTC will demonstrate the country's capabilities in integrated medical tourism care through facility visits and workshops on pertinent considerations and hospital accreditation, among other activities.

"Medical travel must be a sustainable and holistic experience. IMTC will ensure the experience of medical travelers arriving in the country is safe for the sick. They will experience medical travel in a special events format designed to appeal to the five senses," said Geraldine Chew, one of the judges for the International Medical Travel Excellence Awards.

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OPINION

Beyond shadows

THE PLAN OF HOUSE MINORITY CONGRESSMEN to set up a "shadow Cabinet" is an idea whose time may have finally come. Initial resistance to the idea from other members of the political class, however, suggests that, to this day, too many of our politicians still live in the past.

This is not to say that the plan is perfect, a full-grown athena sprung from the head of the opposition's Zeus.

EDITORIAL

The original explanation, issued by Deputy Minority Leader Rolfo Golez, is drawn with broad strokes: "The shadow Cabinet will perform oversight activities as well as serve as critical but constructive partners [in] the crafting of priority measures."

The devil, we know, is in the details. Golez declined to name who among the opposition congressmen would "shadow" which Cabinet secretary; the only other detail he offered was a list of the high-priority departments the opposition would monitor. A close look at his list, however, shows that almost every line department is included.

As we said, it isn't perfect. The way the plan was presented is also problematic, because it stressed that aspect of opposition politics that *we* know, in the Philippines, by the quaint Filipino English word "freedom."

As administration congressmen's quick retort to the idea proves that the plan was, in fact, received as a "fiscalizing" initiative: "There's nothing new with the opposition's move to form a shadow Cabinet that will perform oversight activities and that will be critical of Cabinet members. That's what opposition members have been doing over the years during the President's term," said Rep. Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City. (In other terms, under other Presidents, too.)

Another political player, this time a long-time advocate of constitutional change, belittled the plan as a pale and inadequate reflection of the parliamentary system of government.

But politics, eminently, is the art of the possible. While the use of the resonant phrase is only figurative, "shadow Cabinet" as a political strategy can lead to certain outcomes; in case, as the expression goes, make things happen.

For that reason, it should be welcomed.

Setting up a "shadow Cabinet" will not only allow the opposition to hold the administration in greater account; it will also allow the opposition to place itself under greater accountability. How? It will force opposition congressmen to do their homework. It will force opposition congressmen to choose an area of specialization. (After all, generic criticism is easy; informed, expert criticism is difficult but more useful.) Not least, it will force opposition congressmen to raise the standards of policy debate and public discourse. (Most her politicians allied with the Arroyo administration will follow this lead is another matter altogether, and may be decided, in large part, at the polls in 2010.)

The principal assumption behind the "shadow Cabinet" idea, in other words, is *reform* with possibility. It will help it grow in political maturity.

Consider: Instead of the minority leader (Rep. Feraldo Zamora of San Juan) or his spokesman doing all the talking, other opposition members will step up to the microphone. A health care crisis may require the expertise of a doctor in the House; an inquiry into the Arroyo administration's counter-terrorism strategy may require the competence of a national-security expert.

(As politicians will be quick to realize, this setup runs counter to the personalistic nature of our politics: no one leader, no one spokesman, will hog the spotlight. This is bad for those with ambitions for higher office, but—if managed well—a boon for governance.)

To be sure, the chauvinism of Philippine politics is deeply flawed; many of its defects can end the "shadow Cabinet" experiment prematurely.

Our political parties remain weak; with one or two exceptions, they remain what they have always been since the first legislature was inaugurated a hundred years ago: political factions, centered around a political personality of fabulous wealth. The reality of political participation continues to remain! sheer opportunistic over dominant principle. And the line between the administration or the opposition, despite the turmoil of the past few years, remains chlur.

But as the Greek poet Pindar said: Enhance the limits of the possible. The "shadow Cabinet" idea seems like a good next step. Take it.

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Floods caused by uncollected garbage

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE FLOODS THAT SWAMPED METRO Manila last week were not the fault of the rains alone. The bigger culprit is the garbage that clogged the drainage systems, the esteros, streams and creeks. The biggest culprits, however, are the local governments and the contractors they hired to collect the garbage.

Our people do not throw their garbage in every part of Metro Manila were flooded, Malabon was not. Whatever! That is the city called "Little Venice" which is never more than ten flooded. Even when it does not rain, Malabon is flooded when the tide is high. But who was it dry last Thursday when most of Metro Manila was flooded after the heavy rains? Because the tide was out and Malabon had an effective drainage system. All that heavy rain flowed out through the drainage system. It is the high tide that flooded Malabon.

Just why was Metro Manila flooded? Because the drainage system is clogged.

Despite intensive dredgeging operations by the Metro Manila Development Authority, the drainage system is always clogged again by uncollected garbage and trash and people themselves into the esteros, creeks and rivers by lazy residents with filthy habits.

This is what happens: Instead of the local government unit collecting the garbage, mayors award contracts to their political supporters to do the collecting. They are paid by the truckload of trash collected. Despite the hundreds of millions of pesos paid to such contractor each year, the contractor chooses the shortest route to the dumpsite. He collects the number of truckloads of the actually collects much more than he reported. This is because he finds back some of the fees to certain mayors and some of their subalterns.

Furthermore, instead of each city or municipality having its own dumpsite, the contractors are likely to find some vacant lot to dump all the trash they have collected. Quezon City has its Payatas dumpsite, which is due to be closed soon. Others are the Antipolo dumpsite and others clandestinely use the closed but filthy dumpsites. But most of the other contractors dump their loads here and there in hidden areas at nights—in creeks and streams, in private lots and unoccupied public land. If you will inspect will quickly inhabited areas near Metro Manila, you will find many of these cubicum dumpsites.

This is the garbage that is washed into the creeks and rivers and clog them and block the flow of water into the sea. That is why even ordinary rains are flooded easily, an occurrence that rarely happened before.

In the concrete jungle, meanwhile, garbage uncollected by the contractors lie in heaps on the side of streets where residents have thrown them. During heavy rains, they are washed into the drains and culverts and into the drainage pipes and clogged them so that water cannot pass through.

Furthermore, parking stalled vehicles on flooded streets has become a favorite excuse for some people. Often the allowing pedestrians arise water underpass there lives dry to use, few cities, planks laid out across flooded streets and sidewalks, or burying them from one place to another ahead any contraption that will keep the feet paying passengers above water. It is there, too, why businessmen are in Pasay underpass is supposed to have the streets flooded. And that is why they purposely clog the drainage pipes with garbage. It is a sure lawsuit the MMDA workers and those entrepreneurs, the question of which government agency whether it should be flooded or not. Right now, the entrepreneurs seem to be winning.

So what are we to do? First, change the way the garbage contractors are paid. Paying basically the number of truck reports the easy an cheating. Perhaps a contractor's payment be paid for hauling a certain tonnage. But, if anybody complains of uncollected garbage, the contractor should not be paid. That will make the contractor take it upon himself to prevent residents from dumping garbage made on the streets, sidewalks, or empty lots.

Second, remove the squatters from the banks of esteros and rivers. Or at least police them closely. Collect their garbage promptly so they don't throw them into the esteros and rivers.

Third, establish sanitary landfills inside Metro Manila, not in neighboring provinces. Nobody wants garbage dumped in their backyards. How would Metro Manilans feel if neighboring provinces dumped their garbage in their backyards?

But where is that place in crowded Metro Manila. Look west, young man. It is there, on cowboys said big that you don't see it. What is it? Thirsea!

Since the garbage is reclaim the sea in due time, you will have hectares and hectares of valuable land for free. If the Mall of Asia and its surrounding areas were manila-land reclaimed from the sea with sand and silt, why not reclaim an area with garbage? The achieve a third purpose. Except for of the garbage and you acquire land cheap that can then be developed and sold at high prices.

Before environmentalists jump at me, I hasten to add that the idea has been done successfully in Japan, the United States and other countries with very strict environmental laws. I come from Japan has already come here to make studies upon invitation of an environmental NGO and came out with a report that the same can be done here.

I have written about this a number of times already but here, again, is how it is done. The garbage need not even reach the water. An area is first reclaimed the traditional way with sand and silt from the sea. Then it is covered with layer of the garbage, first compressed into cubes and sprayed with chemicals, are dumped onto it. There is covered with soil, after a while, the reclaimed land can be developed into a park, a residential community or industrial area, a golf course or a factory paid for numerously...as has been done in other countries.

Peace isn't just moral, it's practical

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE AMERICANS WHO ARE OPPOSING George W. Bush are in true—and they are sore most Americans—are right to say one thing. If Bush and Dick Cheney and their jones it is by believe in the righteous of their war, they should send their own kids to fight. Easy to be brave when you and your loved ones are far from the whizzing bullets or from the threat of being conscripted and hung from an electric pole while you talk of retribution and threat of empire.

The same is true here. The widows of the one hundred soldiers here who were pleased that GMA sent out more troops to Basilan and add to the number of the dead. The church and various institutions have already pleaded with GMA to ask questions first and about later rather than the other way around to spare the innocent lives of Basilan.

GMA refuses to listen, she should send Mikey and Dato Arroyo to lead the troops and their sons can't to send to the surrender. One is tempted to say she should send Mike Arroyo as well to glowing talks, but with him at the front line the troops might get very to Khin and openly your disorders. The only way to heal is by example. Especially as in war. You cannot call for blood, sweat and tears like Churchill without shedding some of your own.

None of this is to say that the people who are headed the soldiers in Basilan should not be brought to justice. Certainly not justified what GMA set on send

Filipino or Pilipino or Tagalog?

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

SOMETIME LAST WEEK THE BANGKOK gallery was exposed to a heated debate about language. The spectacle was not quite as raucous as events in the Marawi battleground but it is indeed some stinky problems which remain unresolved. Concretely the problem centers around the question, What is our national language?

The 1973 Constitution, through Article XV, Section 3, made a distinction between "Filipino," which connotes with English was made an "official language," and "Pilipino," which was envisioned as the "common national language."

The "Filipino" referred to was actually the Tagalog universally in use as distinct from the other Tagalog of literary writers. Together with English, Pilipino was, under the 1973 Constitution, the official language. "Official language" means the medium of communication for all official acts of or transactions with the various departments, agencies and offices of the government. Moreover, by Presidential Decree No. 155, Spanish continued "to be recognized as an official language in the Philippines for as long as important documents in government files were in the Spanish language and not translated into either the English or Pilipino language."

Pilipino," on the other hand, was seen by the 1972 Constitution as a language yet to be developed. Consisting of a fusion of the various existing Philippine languages, it was envisioned as the "common national language." It was hoped that it would be symbolic of the Filipino nation and of the wonder of the Filipino soul. It was also supposed to become the official medium of communication.

Major changes were made by the 1987 Constitution. The debate in the Bantayan has never seen a reenactment of what transpired during the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission.

Under the 1987 Constitution, the basic policy on language is stated in Section 6 of Article XIV. It says: "The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. Subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate, the government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communications and as language of instruction in the educational system."

As our 36 acts, Filipino, which was seen as a dream by the 1973 Constitution, is now categorically declared to be "national language." While the 1987 Constitution has retained the distinction between Filipino and Pilipino, it is either has desire of Philippine language development. Congress was mandated to, in its own words, Filipino has been made the national and official language.

This did not go unnoticed on the floor of the Commission and it prompted Commissioner Cornelio Bautista to ask whether the framers of the 1987 Constitution to the Bantayan to develop Filipino as a national language had already been accomplished. To reply, linguistic experts were cited as saying that even prior to 1972 Constitution Filipino was already a lingua franca throughout the archipelago known as Filipino. Whereupon a defender of Filipino obliged with a demonstration. He said: "When am referring to the masses of our people, the mass we came in contact with in our public hearings. Those are the ones who say, 'Ano kayo magbabad sapos dito?' instead of the precise saying 'Gaano kayo magtatagal pagbabayan dito?' But we understand what they mean when they say 'Ano, sapos good may bisnes ka rito?' instead of 'Gaano kayo ang kanyang ganito' or 'Gaano kalaunan pala ang sabihin' or 'Huang ka nasa mga sapos at tyad' or 'Mahirap pa ngani.' These speakers of the lingua franca throughout the nation, under the circumstances, understood or, more consciously or unconsciously, they not would choose those Filipinos can comprehend."

What is a sampling of the language which embodies the Filipino soul, it makes you wonder what the Filipino soul looks like?

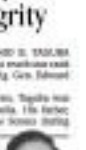
The Constitutional Commission, however, was quite aware that Filipino, as illustrated above, was undeveloped and undergoing evolution. Hence the needed existence of Section 6 adds: "As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages." Hence, too, the second paragraph of Section 6 is very sensitive in referring to Filipino as "medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system."

Section 7, however, categorically makes Filipino the official language for purposes of communication and instruction while referring to English also as official language "until otherwise provided by law." In effect, too, the second paragraph indicates further work other than printed languages, to official "auxiliary media of instruction." Likewise, the promotion of Spanish has been reduced to optional effort in the same way as Arabic. There has also been recognition of the special role Spanish has played in Philippine history and of the affinity of large segments of the South to Arabic.

So, when Congressman Lopez speaks of the Bantayan in celebration of Gregor ng Wika, did he speak in Filipino, Pilipino or Tagalog?

Gen. Taguba pays a price for integrity

REVEILLE



Ramon J. Farolan

TEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, ANTONIO M. TAGUBA became only the second Filipino American to reach one star in the United States Army. The first was Maj. Gen. Edward Soriano.

The son of humble parents from Laguna, Taguba was born on Dec. 31, 1950 in Sampaloc, Manila. His father, Isaias Taguba, served with the Philippine Scouts during World War II. Isaias

Ramon J. Farolan

served the Ramon Durch bunch and retired as a sergeant in the US Army. At the age of eleven, he moved with his family to Hawaii where Tony finished his secondary educa-

tion. With help from the Army ROTC program, he enrolled in the Golden State University finishing in 1972 with a BS degree majoring in History.

After graduation, the US Army commissioned him as a second lieutenant and he served in the platoon, company, battalion and brigade levels in Germany, South Korea and the continental United States. He also had assignments as he earned three masters' degrees — in public administration, international relations and national security and strategic studies.

He was promoted to brigadier general in August 1997 and, a few months later, to the rank of major general.

On January 6, the then Ghraib-scandal hotter with the release of a CD full of images of abuse committed in this detention facility in Iraq. The CD included shots of nude male detainees, female detainees exposing themselves to guards, and detainees performing indecent acts with each other.

An investigation was set in motion and since the commander of the 800th military police brigade, the unit in charge of Abu Ghraib, was a brigadier general, the Army needed a two-star officer to head the inquiry. Maj. Gen. Taguba, who was the deputy commander for support, units, combat commands, stationed in Kuwait, was dressed to handle the probe.

Taguba's report — officially it is "Ltr Annl 15-6 Report of Abuse of Prisoners in Iraq" — was completed in March and laid the blame for the situation on a "failure of leadership." At least to the media greatly embarrassed Pentagon and White House officials with its searching investigation of torture and other abuses of prisoners.

Lara Jane, Spurgeon Lewis, team leader in the love balm magazine, described Taguba's conduct as the hands of US Defense officials led by Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Appointed by, they suspected him of being the source of the leak. And, perhaps, they were the source of the wrongful leak.

On May 8, 2004, Taguba was summoned to meet with Secretary Rumsfeld who was scheduled to testify the next day before the Senate and House armed services committees.

As he was ushered into the secretary's office, Rumsfeld declared in a menacing voice: "Here — comes — that lieutenant General Taguba — of the Taguba report." The meeting was attended by his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz (of recent World Bank fame), Stephen Cambone, undersecretary of defense for intelligence, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman, joint chiefs of staff, and Gen. Peter Schoomaker, US army chief of staff.

In the morning, the officials professed ignorance about Abu Ghraib. Rumsfeld was particularly concerned about how the classified report had become public. He asked the general how he got it. Taguba replied that he had given a copy of that package, a senior military leader who knew about the investigation had done so. Rumsfeld also complained about not being given the information he needed. "Here I am," Taguba recalled Rumsfeld saying, "has a secretary of defense and we have not seen a copy of your report and I have to see it from the newspapers and from the media."

"Taguba said Rumsfeld was in denial. He had submitted more than a dozen copies of his report through normal channels, the Pentagon and Coalition command headquarters." On reality, Rumsfeld had a reputation for micro-managing the defense department and for bullying people he disagreed with and it is unlikely that he would have missed out on such an explosive report.)

When I saw Taguba's successor on the congressional committees, I remember watching him on CNN, giving his comments. He spoke clearly, replying to their questions without any sign of emotion, exuding the simple dutch embrace any hint of exaggeration.

After his report, censures from both sides of the aisle were generous in their praise of Taguba and his report. Sen. John Warner, the senior Republican on the committee said, "Senator, if I were in your position I would be very proud of your service." Sen. Edward Kennedy (Democrat) said, "General Taguba, I want to join others in commending you and thanking you for your service to this country."

After the congressional hearings, Taguba was ordered to report for duty in the office of the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs where he would be "wrecked." Suddenly, Gen. John Abizaid, commander of central command, bluntly told him: "You and your report will be investigated." He testified that his career was at a dead end.

In January 2006, Taguba received a telephone call from Gen. Richard Cody, the army vice chief of staff. "This is your Vice," he told Taguba. "I need you to retire by January of 2007." He reasons was offered, no explanations exchanged.

In his interview with Farolan, Taguba said, "They always shoot the messenger. Poke around of being overzealous and aggressive. I don't think I was being overzealous but doing what I was asked to do."

"From the moment a soldier retires, are medium loyalty duty, honor, integrity and selfless service," Taguba said. "But yet when we go to the various offices here, we forget those values. I know that my peers in the army will be mad at me for speaking out but the fact is that we violated the laws of land with due to Abu Ghraib. We violated the letter of the Geneva Conventions. We violated the letter of the Convention Against Torture. We violated our principles and we violated the core of our military values. I believe that those civilians and military leaders responsible should be held accountable."

Last January 6th, Gen. Antonio Taguba, the boy from manila, retired from the US Army after 34 years of military service.

* * *

Last month, in one of the great ironies of life, Maj. Gen. Taguba was honored by Citizenship and Immigration Services Agency with the "American by Choice" award given to outstanding immigrants who chose American citizenship and demonstrated commitment to the United States and its values.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

For whom the shells fall

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Norodyn Mastajo

IT IS PRAY SEASON IN GAZA. IT IS HARVEST time. It is a joyful time, a time for reaping, for the ancient and time-honored ritual of gathering the abundance that has always characterized this lush and fertile land of violence and blessed with a foreign citizen and citizen equal measure of fear and love. How ruthlessly should go hungry.

But not this year.

It was not to be the midst of the first season when then President Joseph Estrada, upon the advice of his military strategists, also ordered an "all-out war" in Sulu. The order was not secret and the very morning that it was to take effect.

I had to a friend in Zamboanga on a stopover from Manila when I got what sounded like a bomb. It came from there because Mindanao bureau chief Carol Arguillas, who broke the news to me which was a bombshell to her through the very available net, the phone line, and asked that I get my report out right away because I was and stay safe, or take the next plane to take that night (which option it might not be allowed to book) and ride it.

Despite her insistence that no story was worth dying for, etc., I didn't even give myself time to think about it. I had to get out of there, and without any reservations in being a journalist would have taken the other, safer choice.

To this day I still can't make out how I was able to survive the rush around at the port terminal at Zamboanga City. I was in a daze, I remember, as I tried to cover the war in Jolo but had to unleash the outlaw call from Cotabi, my son, a street-raging lawmaker, and myself.

I remember seeing "those" people, I suppose, again, without in any positive "way" in Jolo. I was stranded in Manila off the Sta. Ignacio gate days after the last of the 21 "Ipasdan hostages" had been rescued and released. Transportation to and from Jolo was suspended, air conveyance more out still, usually involving the provinces from the rest of the country.

It is still a source of wonder to me how we were able to get the story, including video footage and photos to Metro Manila and the rest of the world way after day, living on the edge, knowing that any day, any hour, our "hostesses" on the second story of the house could be used by the military and we would all be hauled off to detention. I don't know how did we do it? Another story for another day.

The September 2000 war in Sulu came on the heels of the "all-out war" in Mindanao against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that ended in the military capture of the famous camp Abubakar.

This current war comes almost simultaneously with the military offensive ordered in Basilan in the aftermath of the ambush on a Marine convoy and the beheading and mutilation of US soldiers among the victims of the latest Abu Sayyaf kidnap.

Both are wars of attrition, only the latest in the series of wars that have been waged on the "Moro" through the centuries since Ferdinand Magellan was killed on the shores of Mactan Island by the "Moro" chief Lapu-Lapu. Still Pedro Bucoy to Fidel Ramos to Lapu-Lapu.

Many observers of freedom and human rights, including a group of foreign nationals and foreign consulates, have appealed to the Arroyo administration to call these wars offensives in the war "declared."

Activists and militants in the country have declared it, especially protesting the imperial presence and suspected participation of American troops in this latest threat to the lives and properties of Filipinos.

Even before it began, collateral damage was already evident in the people forced to abandon their land and their homes, now numbering from 45,000 to 55,000 and swelled into evacuation centers where food is scarce, largely living on relief goods from the Philippine National Red Cross and other humanitarian relief agencies. Foreign governments have added to their misery. More, more schools in the target areas of Pandasi, Maimbung, Patikul and Indanan have been temporarily closed.

Last July 28, a consortium of relief agency groups, some organizations of Muslim professionals, the academe, five agencies of government, incidentally doing the Sulu Peace Working Group, after a consensus arrived at in the Peace Forum initiated by the Switzerland-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, issued a manifesto called "Sulu Appeal," appealing to the government through Duta Cruz Abdusadar M. Tan to compel the offensives in Sulu for at least eight weeks, from Aug. 6 to Sept. 9, just to allow the people in the municipalities to harvest the ripened crops in their agricultural lands.

Copies of the appeal, signed by 40 heads of so many organizations and agencies, were also sent to Executive Secretary Edwardo Ermita; Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Jesus Dureza; National Security Adviser Secretary Roilo Golez; Commander, Task Force Comprehensive Security Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu; Brig. Gen. Benjamin Mangudadatu, commander of the 1st Infantry Division; Gen. Efren Abu, chief of staff, and Gen. Oscar Schoonraad, US army chief of staff.

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That NP-LP feeling

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

I USED THE GOOD FORTUNE, WHEN THAT kind, essentially good man, Boy Laurel, was still alive, to ask him about the circumstances of the birth of the Nacionalista Party (NP) as we believe. They used to be positive, less splendid, in an old school way, sort of selfish, composed of genial elders who shed the weight of years of hard living and hard scrabble politics to gather in the "Big Tent" (as Laurel referred to the friend Old Hall of the NP "hotung" Rodriguez, used to call them) of their youth. This and long is true observers also chose to see the NP's origins in Quezon's choice to be the Nacionalista Party's candidate for president in the 1941 election.

But that the NP doesn't help them. Any realism summary of the NP was of seeing a product of Dick Gordon's party (and Gordon, a descendant of the famous Cebu governor of 1663), threatening to the many paper report, Gordon and company were celebrating the arrival of the NP (unconfirmed reporting about the NP after that until the 80s was a matter of Nacionalista folks, and the LP and the NP emerged as somebody.

The LP proudly were the launch of an opposition party which had been against Marcos from the very start. Besides the core of the shedding LP affiliates from the days of the 1950s, the party also included many bad boys (a member of the LP Gerry Roxas had been LP Secretary-General at 21, in those heady days of the Magsaysay administration) and the famous Cebu Boys (Osmeña and Cebu City Mayor Sergio Osmeña III, Jr.) and the Ilocos Boys (Laurel and Ilocos Norte Governor Roque Ablan, Jr.).

The Liberal Party was the party of the Liberal Party (LP) and the Nacionalista Party (NP) were the two major parties in the Philippines. The LP was founded in 1946 by Manuel Roxas, who had been the last president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. The NP was founded in 1907 by Manuel Quezon, who had been the first president of the Philippines.

The LP was known for its support of the United States and its close relationship with the US. The NP was known for its nationalist and anti-American stance.

The LP was also known for its support of the Philippine Scouts and its close relationship with the US military. The NP was known for its opposition to the Philippine Scouts and its close relationship with the Japanese military.

The LP was also known for its support of the Philippine Constabulary and its close relationship with the US military. The NP was known for its opposition to the Philippine Constabulary and its close relationship with the Japanese military.

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Betrayed by press club's leaders

LETTERS

TOPS GAGING KNEES IN MIDnight disguises. At UNP, that "Thou who have abandoned have no reason to complain." He was referring to those who have ceased to actively participate in the activities of the National Press Club because of the betrayal by its present board of directors of the ideals and objectives of NPC as the professional organization of Filipino journalists.

It is like saying that passengers who have abandoned a sinking ship have no reason to complain against the captain and the crew whose negligence, incompetence and stupidity have led to the sinking of the ship. It is like saying that tenants who abandon an apartment because it is full of rust and lack proper facilities have no right to complain against the landlord. Freedom of expression which the NPC purportedly stands for.

Even the public has a right to complain if it sees something wrong in the leadership and management of the NPC because the press club has been the beneficiary of a public donation—specifically a valuable piece of public land that was given as a subsidy to the journalists profession as journalists could live up to public expectations of ethical satisfaction and upholding.

Under the Philippine Constitution, government cannot donate public property to a private entity like NPC was given the land on which it built its clubhouse because of the club's presumed public purpose. To uphold the freedom of the press and the dignity of the **newspaperman's profession ... to [establish] a non-profit facility** for the recreation of the working newspaperman," (Articles of Incorporation.) journalists perform a public function by disseminating truthful information to public affairs.

But in illegally amending the by-laws of NPC in a convention attended only by around 39 persons out of a membership of more than a thousand (due by-laws can only be amended by a majority of the members), NPC's leadership betrayed its legitimate members. It also betrayed the "People of the Philippines" by exempting the benefits of their donation to just wedding journalists or **non-members of the profession.** They did this by allowing unaccredited management flacks (DOH/ DMO) to attend Dole Philippines Inc. to stop operations "following findings that its wastewater failed toxic chemicals.

2. DBS ordered Dole Phils. to stop the operations of its factory in Sarabia, South Catabato.

Allow us to make some clarifications.

1. Dole Phils was issued a CDO (cease and desist order) not because "its wastewater leaked toxic chemicals." The CDO was issued to stop Dole Phils. from any unlawful act or from operating any machine or equipment that would cause pollution until the company secures the required permits from the regional office.

To repeat, Dole Philippines was issued a CDO not because its wastewater leaked toxic chemicals, but because it failed to secure the necessary environmental permit from the DENR-EMB 12 in Koronadal City. The violation was **an administrative one.**

On the second point, Boss Boris, Dole Phils.' general manager, *in a statement obtained by the inquirer, said that the CDO was issued on Aug. 6, 2007 from EMB Region 12, which at the same time "prohibited our main [machinery] and equipment."*

—**BERNIE MATER,** correspondent, Inquirer Mindanao

'Double-dead' meat

MEDIOCRE. A BIG herd of meat taken from "double dead" pigs was seized by the authorities while it was being brought to market.

With the proper government agency still the public here is aware "double dead" meat—not just of pigs but also of chicken and cows? The "seal" placed by the Bureau of Meat Inspection serves as inspected meat can easily be copied.

Could "double dead" meat still be made into cheap fried chicken, empty pata or sizzling steak?

The public deserve a difficult to control and more rigorous inspection ... because, meat—not only is public matters...may be tempted to feed unsuspecting buyers.

—**ANGELE CRUZOS,** amacdonesio@hotmail.com

Dole plant's closure 'administrative'

THE ORIGINAL TO THE news story "DENR closes Dole pineapple plant in S. Cotabato." (Inquirer.n, 8/16/07)

The story stated that:

1. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) ordered Dole Philippines Inc. to stop operations "following findings that its wastewater failed toxic chemicals.

2. EMB ordered Dole Phils. to stop the operations of its factory in Sarabia, South Catabato.

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HR advocates silent on beheadings

I JUST WANT TO SHARE MY FEELings and thoughts in relation to the beheading of Marines in Sindin. The reaction from almost all sectors of society was one of outrage and condemnation.

But the voice of one sector was missing. Where was the voice of the so-called human rights advocates? He didn't hear a word from them about the mutilation of our soldiers. I cannot understand their silence over the incident. even as the families of the fallen soldiers are grieving and crying for justice.

Most often, these human rights advocates are so vigorous in denouncing government activities accused of human rights violations. But they are so silent when it is the rebels who are involved. [END] cleared by the newsroom secretary.

Lastly, Teogilo Salud is the regional director of EMB 12 and not of R&B Oriental Mindanao. As our observant world always empirically told the Bible in Region 12, profit-making and environment conservation must go together.

—**RYAN GIEL TIBAYAN,** PHIL. RED CROSS, Environmental Impact and Monitoring Division, Environmental Management Bureau 12, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Koronadal City

Region 12 is also known as Central Mindanao.

Salud told me on Aug. 8, by phone, that the order for the firm's temporary closure was issued because of environmental violations. He said Dole Phils.' wastewater had a high content of bio-chemical oxygen, meaning it was rare and could destroy plants.

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—**BERNIE MATER,** correspondent, Inquirer Mindanao

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

DAR urges 10-year extension of CARP

By Ver S. Latoza and Joey A. Gabieza
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN Reform sought the support of legislators and other groups in Eastern Visayas for a 10-year extension of a program.

Speaking before a legislators' forum held Friday, DAR Undersecretary Isa Isidro said the agency's Nasyon-wide plan for the agency's accomplishments, unfinished work and third party studies on the impact of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) to convince legislators of the need to extend the program.

"We believe that the 10-year extension that we are seeking for the CARP will be enough to finish the business of distributing land to our still landless farmers," Mr. Isidro said. The extension of the program would require additional P160-billion funding, Mr. Isidro said.

Where the CARP ends next year, they would still have a balance of 1,677 million hectares of multiple-tribunal land intended for 633,846 landless farmers in the country, he added. If extended, the program would cover over 16,000 hectares in Eastern Visayas.

Leyte Rep. Carmen Cari told the farmers that she would support the program since it enables them to own what "economic security."

While he also signified support for the program, Eastern Samar Rep. Teodoro Coquilla asked DAR for a fair distribution of lands to the farmers in the province.

Silliman Rep. Glen Chong and Northern Samar Rep. Emil Ong, however, expressed reservation for the CARP's extension.

Ong asked that before farmers could be issued their certificates of land distribution, all the services needed by the farmers must be put into place first.

Short-haul facilities, farm-to-market roads and irrigation canals must first be constructed so farmers could sell their produce.

Chong also questioned the low turnout of the land DAR distributed during the 19-year implementation of the program.

He said that for the last 19 years, the agency was only able to distribute 3.6 million hectares, which benefited over 867,000 farmers.

However, Nieto said DAR would work towards the completion of land acquisition and distribution of 1,677 million hectares of land within ten years.

He said DAR had provided to farmers some of the services for farmer beneficiaries, such as farm-to-market roads, pre and post harvest facilities, and communal irrigation systems.

Nieto also said the department had conducted capability building and livelihood training while providing access to technology for the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

He also cited a study by Dr. Perdedicado L. Sandoval of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños that showed that the income of an ARB household increased from P67,200 in 1999 to P90,054 in 2000 and P108,180 in 2006.

CARP has been extended for a decade after its original 10-year span ended in 1999. It will end next year.

7 citizens honored on Quezon Day

LUCENA CITY—Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno urged the Filipinos to love and promote the use of the native language as an effective tool to unite the country.

Puno made the point of honor in this year's commemoration of the 129th birth anniversary of former President Manuel L. Quezon yesterday, which served simultaneously [illegible] Quezonian "to-ward the "Modalya ng Kumpanyon" [illegible] of Honor).

Benchers Sogrit, of San Andres came and Department of Public Works and Highways-Southern Tagalog regional director Ismael Sid the roster of awardees. He was awarded for his meritorious service in the field of engineering.

Other awardees were Dalvines Abcede for community service (military); Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, military service; Salvador Meer, entrepreneurship; [illegible] Ramos, education; and former Quezon Vice Gov. Josefa Talahong, government service posthumous.

Quezon, the first president of the Commonwealth government during the Commonwealth's period and the father of the Philippine Language, was born on Aug. 19, 1878 in Baler, Aurora province which became Quezon province. Jeffrey T. Wallace Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

DAVAO FLOATS
Judges inspect a float in the parade which ended the weeklong Kadayawan sa Dabaw festival.

Ifugao to put up seed banks to save native rice

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

IFUGAO CITY—THE IFUGAO provincial government is putting up seed banks in villages to save and revive indigenous rice varieties that have been displaced by commercial ones, Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. said.

He is forming a consortium with the Cagayan State University's Lasam, Baguilat said and the project would also benefit farmers who would be prospective entrepreneurs to manage the seed banks.

He said the local government here is the Ifugao Terraces Movement (Ifumo) has started propagating "Tinawon," a rice variety grown in the province's rice terraces, for more than 13 other indigenous varieties, including the "tinggo," could still be revived.

The Tinawon, which is produced in limited quantities in Ifugao, is also abroad for its fragrance.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization chose Ifugao as the seventh pilot site under its Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) campaign for the development of traditional crop varieties to improve village resources, Baguilat said.

The GIAHS identified the Ifugao rice terraces as the Philippines' only remaining agricultural mountain ecosystem featuring the Ifugaos' ingenuity.

It said Ifugao has a "remarkable agricultural and farming system that has remained the stability ... of the 2,000-year-old organic paddy farming."

It also cited the existence and viability of the rice terraces as a "manifestation of strong cultural, native connections, innovations, engineering systems, interventions and demonstrated spirit of the Ifugaos, guaranteeing the use of the mountainous lands for food production."

Baguilat, also honorary chair of Ifumo, said about two billion farmers worldwide rely on their traditional farming systems.

"We have not lost any of our varieties of traditional varieties ... other varieties disappeared because of the entry of the commercial ones, while others [were victims of] natural death," he said.

The Ifumo would not resort to a "purist" approach in reviving and propagating indigenous rice varieties, he added. They would not scorn modern scientific approaches, such as cross-breeding of traditional and foreign varieties that can easily be propagated and marketed.

He said seeds known to Ifugao could develop new indigenous rice varieties that can be sold in other countries.

The Cordillera farmers' group Ayat Saka said farmers from Ifugao, Mt. Province and Kalinga started in 2003 a seed exchange program to sustain the use and trade of indigenous rice seeds such as "tuwa," "tenggang," "upus" and "balatinaw."

Fernando Bagnas, secretariat member of Ayat Saka, said the farmers started the practice when they noticed the deterioration of their farmlands due to excessive use of chemicals and the invasion of hybrid rice varieties.

The GIAHS cited the "aesthetic value" of the Ifugao rice terraces because "it allows the protection and conservation of the significance of its agricultural biodiversity."

Benguet leaders urged to ban toxic chemicals

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Tighter measures against the sale of farm chemicals would help curb the excessive use of pesticides in the province's fields but researchers said bringing the issue to all vegetable industry stakeholders would mark a crucial victory.

Dr. Carlito Laureta, Benguet State University's research director, said the issue of pesticide use is not new but there remained the need for a heightened public awareness among stakeholders, particularly the farmers.

"This is because the farmers, together with soil, water and crops, are the direct recipients of the effects of pesticide use," he said.

Laureta and Dr. Gondelia Reyes, Isabel Louis University dean of the college of natural sciences in Baguio City revealed before farmers here on Friday the results of their studies on pesticide and heavy metal contamination of the province's farms.

The study's findings showed the rampant use of pesticides and commercial fertilizers for soil and the presence of pesticide residues in tested soil, water and vegetable samples.

Laureta said the province and its towns should pass ordinances and resolutions that would provide the legal bases and policy directions for the industry in reduce volume imports.

"We need a local official and schools must also help promote organic farming and integrated pest management, two farming alternatives that could effectively slow down farmers' dependence on pesticides and commercial fertilizers.

"Organic farming is for the production of organic vegetables, coffee and rice mass for grown organically," he said.

This thrust must include the adoption of good practices and the planting of pest-resistant varieties.

He said that before the IPM Act, the province's farmers practiced conventional farming that was basically organic in approach.

"But for the last 30 years that saw the introduction of the so-called high yielding varieties, also came the indiscriminate use of farm chemicals," he said.

Insecticides, fungicides and herbicides are the pesticides commonly used by farmers.

Laureta also suggested that local officials could ask the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) to provide the province the list of all licensed chemicals. Rebecar Carabin, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ROUNDUP

3 siblings die in Lucena fire

LUCENA CITY—Three siblings died from severe burns all over their bodies after being treated at the Quezon Provincial Medical Center here on Aug. 19.

Police said Jerry Ramos, 12, Jeffrey, 11, and Jomar, 14, the three victims—Rabella Joy, 12, Kimberly, 7, and John Philip, 3, all incinerated. Rabella—were sleeping inside their shack in Purok Mangagang, an urban poor community in Barangay Ibabang Dupay in the outskirts of the city when their lighted gas lamp ignited and started the fire.

The parents of the victims, Rommel and Virginia, left the kids and went out of the house to buy bread, police said. Six days may burns, the two girls died from fluid loss or trauma and the boy succumbed to his injuries. Their bodies were brought to the Quezon Provincial Hospital for treatment.

However, all the children died a few hours later while being transferred to [illegible]. Rabella Joy died at 3:45 p.m. Inquirer Southern Luzon

Fire guts Gapan city market

GAPAN CITY—A fast-moving fire gutted the public market of Gapan City on Aug. 13. Some 400 stalls were reported burnt but the fire destroyed at least P200-million worth of property and goods kept in more than 200 stalls there, fire marshal Norman Pura said in a radio interview.

The market, built in the late 1970s, is considered an important facility in south Nueva Ecija as residents and vendors from Peñaranda, General Tinio, San Isidro, Cabiao, Jaen and San Antonio towns, and from nearby San Miguel, Bulacan, go there to trade.

In Cabiz City, on Aug. 11, fire suspected to have been caused by faulty wiring destroyed the St. Cecilia Catholic Church, reports from parish officials said. Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon

Kin of slain exec ask cops to solve case

DAVAO, Pampanga—Relatives of a bank executive who was found dead last week in the canal fields of Floridablanca have asked the police to expedite the investigation into the killing.

The family of Rolando "Jojo" Javier, 37, manager of the Metrobank branch in the City of San Fernando, made the appeal after police turned over the victim's body to his relatives on Saturday. "I hope the police would be able to get his killers and give justice to his death," said Dr. Amel Javier, the victim's brother.

Pampanga police director Senior Supt. Keith Singian said the body found in Barangay Mancatian in Porac on Aug. 19 was identified through his wife's driver's license and a dried cheque. Investigators recovered Javier's car in Metro Manila. Danilo Dugan, Inquirer Central Luzon

2 persons trapped in tunnel die

BAGUIO CITY—Two men died on Aug. 13 after they were trapped inside a water tunnel burned from old tunnel site in Tuba, Benguet.

Police report identified Pagasian, 40, and Joy de Guzman, 25, died of suffocation while trying to fix water pipes in the tunnel at Barangay Ucab in Baguio. Carolyn Cariaga, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Residents and residents of Mikiwin noticed that their water supply was cut off on Monday.

Pagasian and de Guzman, a member of a small-scale miners in the area, joined Rufino Bilong in entering the tunnel to check water pipes there at about 10 a.m. Bilong somehow later realized that they were missing. Pagasian broke the tunnel. Bilong went after he could not get response. He reported the incident to the police. Members of the Police Mobile Group were also summoned to the scene of Pagasian and Agasian from the tunnel at about 4:45 p.m. Frank Dinalo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Boracay overseer post pushed to save island

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

KALIBO, CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism in Western Visayas is pushing for the appointment of an administrator for Boracay Island as part of efforts to save the island resort from unregulated development.

DOT regional director Helen Tiongson has recommended to Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano, who also chairs the Philippine Tourism Authority, that the PTA appoint an administrator to oversee the day-to-day operations of the island.

The recommendation came amid renewed calls to regulate development projects on the island, which is facing problems of overpopulation and unsanitary conditions because of bad things.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources last week called the six-month moratorium on the construction of new buildings on the island until the PTA comes up with a new development master plan for the island.

He said the PTA and Boracay Tourism Bureau Chairperson Marcelo Tumbocon should help remove strife and dissension to projects on the island while safeguarding the sustainability of its resources.

"Nobody seems to be in charge here," Tiongson told the business community.

Tiongson said the appointment of an island administrator would help remove strife and dissension to projects on the island while safeguarding the sustainability of its resources.

The DOT is also planning to come up with an environmental protection master plan for the island within the period.

Tiongson said the appointment of an island administrator would help remove strife and dissension to projects on the island while safeguarding the sustainability of its resources.

He said the PTA and Boracay Tourism Bureau Chairperson Marcelo Tumbocon should help remove strife and dissension to projects on the island while safeguarding the sustainability of its resources.

The PTA is tasked to implement DOT programs pertaining to the development, promotion and supervision of tourism projects. It develops identified priority areas and approves facilities in these areas.

The DOT, created by Presidential Decree No. 189, is tasked to oversee the sustainable development of Boracay Tourism.

It is empowered to formulate plans for the sustainable development of tourism in Boracay and to recommend rules and regulations related to these plans to the PTA.

It also advises policies promoting sustainable development in the island and ensure the protection of major projects. The DOT is officially determine the projects and are projects and ensure the preservation of the island's natural and cultural heritage.

While these laws appear to have given the DOT enough authority to resolve the political jurisdiction of Boracay town in Aklan.

Conflicts between the local governments, stakeholders and other agencies over policies concerning Boracay have repeatedly erupted.

Tiongson said the conflicts and confusion and problems in managing the island is happening in unsustainable development.

Tiongson also recommended that the PTA and DPC put in place a unified working arrangement that will address the various development concerns of Boracay.

He also pushed for the DOT, PTA, DPC, local governments and other government agencies to draft guidelines that will govern the development of the island and impose specific responsibility for its implementation.

Durano also said the department has conducted capability building and livelihood training while providing access to technology for the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

Albay cop chiefs sign pact against bribes

LEGAZPI CITY—POLICE CHIEFS in three cities and 15 towns in Albay and the provincial police director signed on Friday a covenant to keep themselves clean of bribes from operators and protectors of illegal activities, especially the illegal numbers game jueteng.

Albay police director Senior Supt. Herold Ubalde said he and the 18 police chiefs would keep banned aspects of the signed covenant in their respective offices to allow their sincere efforts to subdue gambling and other forms of illegal activities in the province.

In the Bicol region, which was once reputed as one of the hotbeds of jueteng in the country, Albay had the biggest number of arrested individuals involved in jueteng.

From January to August this year, Albay police arrested 115 people in 128 antigambling operations. There were only 11 operations over the same period in 2006.

Last Aug. 5, 36 persons allegedly involved in jueteng operations were arrested in Malilipot town; the latest raid undoubtedly riled police.

The suspects were still in jail facing charges, and none of them has posted the recommended P20,000 bail each.

In Camarines Sur, there were 68 arrests; Camarines Norte, 35; Sorsogon, 30; Masbate, 18; and Catanduanes, 2.

Among operations those days, Ubalde said, had been repeatedly happening in remote towns and in islands, like Capusay San Miguel and Bapo Bapo, more than in key mainland cities and towns where violators can be caught easily.

He said those were also the areas not yet reached by the Small Town Lottery (STL), while some of those areas were relief-inclined that the police would not easily penetrate for security reasons.

Ubalde, however, said those factors would not stop them from strictly adhering to laws supporting the campaign against illegal gambling, regardless of who operators protected it.

Following earlier beliefs that the STL was nothing but a legal cover up for jueteng, Ubalde said the provincial board repented having received information that STL results were being rigged by altering or manipulating the draw machines of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) here.

The STL in Albay had been under investigation by the provincial board on the issue that STL was being used as a front for jueteng.

Ubalde confirmed the transfer of many of the people involved in jueteng to STL. "It is also true that STL results are being manipulated, then STL would be nothing different from jueteng, whose results are usually being controlled for its sponsors' greater gain," he added.

He added the provincial board's concern on games and amusements also refused reports that not all bets or collections were being reported to the PCSO.

If true, Ubalde said, then STL is "fruitless."

Ubalde, he explained, is an illegal activity where smaller bets are sent in control to the STL for instead consolidated by small-time financiers to operate their own numbers game using the results of the STL as their bases for drawing the winning combinations.

Ubalde said he has informed the PCSO of those unconfirmed reports and recommended that the guidelines for STL operations be strengthened to keep its credibility as a legitimate numbers game.

Some of their recommendations were to require STL collections in always more than P.5K, the STL operators to consult the police with the names of their legitimate collectors, and to make STL "peddlers" an accountable form by stamping control numbers on them.

He added that it could also be an option to televise STL draws in a local TV station and to furnish concerned parties with copies of sales report supported by documents. *Ephraim Ignilay, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

CHOPPER CHECK
A crew member checks the engine of the Huey helicopter upon landing in Talavera town in Baslan.

SMALL TOWN Lottery paraphernalia in Guinobatan town in Albay.

PNP negotiating to raise support from lottery

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon said his agency has been negotiating with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office to increase the share of the Philippine National Police in the proceeds of the small town lottery from 5 to 7 percent.

"We are still haggling with the PCSO to increase its level of support to us," Calderon said when the lawyers asked if he found the STL share to him enforcement units sufficient.

The PNP received P15.75 million or 5 percent of the net receipts of P1.025 billion for 16 months. Gross sales received by the PCSO from at least 36 STL-franchise holders totaled P1.544 billion from Feb. 28, 2006 to June 2007, a report from the PCSO showed.

"It is support, not share," Calderon clarified on the additional funds the PNP was seeking from the PCSO.

The franchise issued by Congress set the shares.

The government's charity fund got the bulk of net proceeds at P938.31 million.

STL operators get 5 percent as commission while bet collectors get 15 percent from cuts of the 25-percent operating funds.

From their P5.6 million share, Central Luzon police bought motorcycles, computers with printers, digital cameras and Motorola notebooks, until regional police director chief Supt. Ismael Rafaman.

Calderon has sought a "bigger support" since the PNP needed additional logistics to fight crimes and further curb jueteng, the illegal numbers game of STL. *Rosario Dreyan, Inquirer Central Luzon*

EMBRACEMENT Undersecretary Demetrio Ignacio and Rizal police director Inchargo Senior Supt. Rudig Agnasayao Tiro join different government agencies, Army, police, Mary Aquella and students plant trees during the launch of the Trees for Life project in the Rizal region, held at the Mayon Volcano Natural Park in Barangay Libong, Sto. Domingo, Albay on Friday. More than 3.6 million tree seedlings are expected to be planted this month in the region.

Slain soldier to get full military honors during burial in today

MALIBAY, QUEZON—ARMED Forces Southern Luzon Command chief, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the government will render full military honors in the interment of slain soldier, 2nd Lt. Charlie Anthony Lumbo on scheduled today.

"He deserves full military honors including a 21-gun salute and an officer. He's a hero not only before his town but also of the whole Filipino people," Esperon told Carmelino's parents and only sister when the general cleared up at the outset of the slain young officer Thursday morning.

Esperon immediately ordered Solcom officials, who accompanied him, to arrange the multi-tiered military burial ceremony for the fallen soldier.

When the general learned that the town parish priest might not be available today, Esperon said a military chaplain will officiate at the interment ceremony.

Charlie, a platoon leader in the army's 33rd Infantry Battalion, died in a three-hour gun fight with the Abu Sayyaf in the village of Tanduyong in Mauban town, Sula province on Aug. 9, two days after he celebrated his 22nd birthday.

The Mauban native has been recognized in this coastal municipality's founding history as the town's first and only graduate as far of the elite Philippine Military Academy.

"Lieutenant Cameleon epitomizes the courage of our young officer corps. He faced enemy fire with the character and integrity of the Filipino soldier. His bravery will be a source of constant inspiration to every Filipino officer and soldier," Esperon told Carmelo's family and relatives all co-ramped up in whatever small space left in the sala beside the casket.

The general said Carmelino's death will be the new symbol of the government's determination to achieve permanent peace in war-torn Mindanao.

Esperon consoled with retired Maj. Gen. Alejandro Cortuche, his wife Alaha and daughter Kristine and empathized with the grieving family by recalling his own mother's sentiments during his years as a young Army lieutenant.

Esperon even asked Alaha if she's now inclined to follow her brother's footsteps at the PMA but the senior student at the local high school here only managed to reply with an impish smile.

Her father beamed on "Well, if that would be her decision, we would not say no just like the time when we gave our blessing to her brother when he decided to enter the academy. Soldiering is a noble profession. The Filipino people should be proud of them."

The elder Carmelino spent 23 years of military service, most of them in troubled Mindanao, as a member of the Army's elite unit, the Scout Rangers.

Esperon said the Army will provide all possible help and assistance it can extend to the family. "The Army takes care of its own. We will therefore make sure that proper assistance is given to his family and to the best of our ability to ensure the uninterrupted education of his sisters. This is the least we can do for this young Filipino hero," said the full-bemedaled.

The general conferred with Carmelino's cousin PMA classmate, 2nd Lt. Alvin Bonanno, who was acting as the "survivor officer" tasked to help the family organize the myriad aspects of mourning, including the filing up of paperwork for government benefits.

Esperon told the bereaved that most of their friends will also come to Mauban, about 197 kilometers east southeast of Manila, to attend the last rites for their dauntless uncle. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Bicolanos plant over 5,000 seedlings for 'Trees for Life'

LEGAZPI, ALBAY—A POSITIVE MOOD prevailed at the Mayon Volcano Natural Park in Barangay Libong here as about 300 volunteers from different sectors convened on Friday for the Rizal launch of the "Trees for Life" planting project of the environment department.

"I think the turnout here is higher than (Thursday's) national launch at the Ipo Dam," said Demetrio Ignacio, Undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who was guest speaker during the event.

More than 5,000 seedlings were allocated for the Rizal launch and a total of 10 hectares from the park were targeted to be used as planting areas.

Rizal has committed to plant a total of 2.8 million seedlings until the end of the year, said DENR regional executive director Priscilla Jonas.

"The DENR currently has 600,000 seedlings in stock, and more are being propagated for the plantings across the 16 concurrences in the succeeding months," he added.

Recently from the DENR-Rizal office dictated that 768 hectares across the region were targeted to be planted by a projected 14,333 volunteers until December.

The activity attracted 34 partner groups comprised of members of government agencies, local government units, non-government organizations, the academe, media outlets, private organizations, the police and the military.

The "Trees for Life" project is a multi-sectoral and laborious activity of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Green Philippines Program, which aims to promote and plant 20 million tree seedlings across the wide Years July to December 2007.

Thematic Areas

For each month until December, a new focus will be launched which will determine the kind of areas for planting for the rest of the month.

In Rizal, each new area theme will be spearheaded to a different province.

"For example, the theme for August is watershed areas and protected areas. The regional launch was in Albay, but we will also have simultaneous provincial launchings and tree plantings throughout other watersheds and protected areas across Rizal for the rest of the month," Jonas said.

The month of September's theme will be coastal and mangrove areas, to be launched in Batangas.

Agroforestry or

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More Sports on A23 to A26

Late SPORTS

TOP THREE PICKS: Joe Devance (center), Ryan Reyes of Ilo. Lorie (left) and Dominican Roman celebrate their selection.

Welcoat taps Devance; Eman to San Miguel

By Hussang R. Cavallo

WELCOAT ADDED A CORNERSTONE TO its roster yesterday by snagging 6-foot-7 PF-American center Joe Devance as the first overall pick in the PBA Rookie Draft.

And even if coach Leo Austria described his new acquisition as the "total package," the fact that PBA Rookie of the Year said that getting into the playoff in his third tournament would already be an achievement.

"While the other teams are looking at making the Finals every conference, for us to get into the playoffs is OK," Austria said. "We'll do that for Devance's to the logical choice, because he is the complete package centering the prospects.

"He can play both ends, and that is very important."

The Welcoat mentor seemed to be here and he able to help the team win a championship." Devance, a 19-year-old graduate of Criminal Justice studies at the University of Texas in El Paso, said.

That left Barangay Ginebra as San Miguel's logical choice until the 6-foot-5 center from Hawaiian was picked second overall by the Governor's in the coming half when a gunpowder crowd at the Market! Market! in Taguig and backed by Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdogs and Goldilocks.

"I really wanted to be drafted by this team, because I was raised after it," said Eman, whose father Bernardo coached for San Miguel and named him after the world famous beer. "I'm just so excited."

Ilo. Lorie, at coach Boyet Fernandez had hinted, pulled out the first surprise of the proceedings by selecting Calbiotan-raised, 24-year-old point guard Ryan Reyes with the No. 5 pick.

"I was just nervous at first," the 6-foot-1 Reyes said. "After the nervousness went away, I told myself that I'm ready to join the PBA and I think Ilo. Lorie is a great fit for me."

Former Mentors stalwarts JC Intal and Doug Kramer were chosen fourth and fifth, respectively by the GP, which also drafted ex-Ilo. Ilo guard Roger Yuard Aljamal with the eighth overall choice.

Ace Bonzo, the former Falcon from Adamson who was the UAAP MVP award last year, was joined by hotly JR Quinahan at Alaska, which picked sixth and seventh. There were reports of a Nic Belasco for Jaypee Cabagnot trade being worked out which could Tim Cone of Alaska refused to comment on.

San Miguel used its second first-round selection, its natural choice which was ninth, to select former Far Eastern outrigger Jonas Villanueva, though there were rumors yesterday that management had tried to trade away that right.

Micky Ibarakan, the hard-nosed guard coming out of decree, went to Barangay Ginebra as the 10th overall choice.

Teams now have the next five working days to tender offers as last-first draft choices in accordance the free agency. Players who get offers but don't sign until their respective teams will have to seek release from the teams that drafted them.

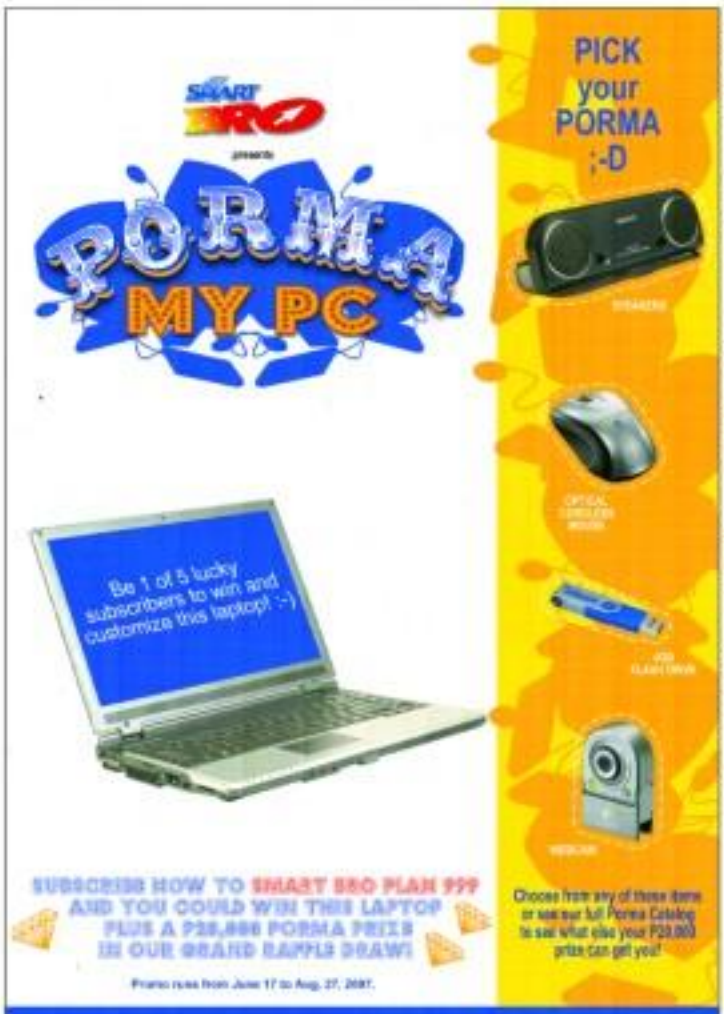
A total of only 17 players out of the 44 in the pool was selected, with Gino Gilo tapping Rotgers Dacoyah 11th overall and Welcoat getting for Jeff Sanchez shooting guard Ryan Arana at No. 12.

Melvin Matandang was selected by Ilo. Lucio, while former Sinco University point guard Marvin Cruz was chosen by NLEX as the 14th pick.

Jojo Duizol, the UAAP Finals MVP for Santo Tomas last year who signed as Energy his final year with the Growling Tigers, went to Red Bull, which passed on its own selection...the 13th choice—after Alaska had drafted Jeff Laurel at No. 11.

Talk 'N Text, which had only once choice the entire afternoon after trading what turned out to be the eighth overall pick to ADT in the Ryan Reyes-Rizzo trade two years ago, passed up on its only choice.

The Express rounded out proceedings by selecting Rolly Maulana with the 20th choice.



Eduque Cup golf at Agui GC today

THE ANNUAL GOLF DUEL BETWEEN the Kamagayan Golf Club and Media goes into its third decade today at its original home, the Agoncillo Golf Club in Quezon City.

Now renamed the Tito Eduque Cup, the long-running golf rivalry will be on its 21st staging with the Kamagayan golfers seeking an unprecedented fourth straight victory over the Media golfers.

The 36-hole event will be played under the Callaway system.

Kamagayan golfers had beaten their Media rivals by a whopping total of 60 strokes in the past three years, including last year's 30-stroke rout at Mimi Plaza.

The top 10 players on each side will round toward the team's total.

The event is the 6th edition of the Eduque Cup, which was named after the late national basketball coach and founding chair of the "Right 9 Group of Restaurants Tito Eduque (9-9-04 r.i.p.).

Cindy Pineda led last year's Kamagayan squad to victory over Media with a net 67. The defending Media champion is Rene Gonzales of the bayanan.

Aplus METRO
Editor Ever C. Dipasupil
Tech-savvy feedback: aplus@inquirer.net (amongst) by texting 0917 (Globe) or 1800 (Smart). E-mail: pi_tech@inquirer.com.ph

DID YOU KNOW

MIGUEL Lopez de Legazpi, the first Spanish governor-general of the Philippines, died of heart failure on Aug. 20, 1572 in Manila. A few months before he passed away, Legazpi was able to set aside a piece of land in Manila for the Augustinian priests. The Augustinians built their convent and the San Agustin Church on the land by 1586, in time for the fourth centenary of the country's evangelization, a chapel inside San Agustin Church was dedicated to Legazpi.
Cecil L. Rosaroso, Inquirer Research

SC: MMDA can't close bus terminals

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority cannot close down bus terminals on main thoroughfares, according to the Supreme Court which has struck down the President's executive order authorizing the agency to build mass transport terminals to help ease Metro traffic.

In a ruling dated Aug. 15, the high court said the Department of Transportation and Communications, and not the MMDA, was the proper agency to undertake the project. It added that the MMDA has no police power and, consequently, has no authority to close down terminals.

Under President Macapagal-Arroyo's Executive Order 179 issued in February 2003, she ordered the MMDA to implement the Greater Manila Transport System project.

The project called for the relocation of bus terminals on major roads in Metro Manila and the establishment of bus mass transport terminals that would integrate the various modes of transportation like buses, the mass railway transit system and national railways.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, however, told the Inquirer yesterday that he was not aware of any order from the President to close down bus terminals.

"I don't know of any plan to close down the bus terminals in Cubao. What I know is that the President asks not to do something, I can't disobey," he said over the phone.

Fernando added that the plan to set up centralized bus terminals was not aimed at phasing out the existing ones on major roads. "They are only going to be used for quick loading and unloading," he explained.

His agency's order was questioned by Victor Transportation

SC, MMDA SOS

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Suspend classes by 5 a.m., Abalos urges mayors

Citizen's call

Unwanted 'barkers'

THERE'S an annoying group of people I see almost on my way to work at a call center who are stationed at the San Joaquin intersection, in Pasig City, near Shaw/ortigas/ave. They force you to pay them when they had a taxi for you even if you don't need them to do this. They are very rude to the point of hitting cabs that won't give them tips. These people are out of control!

TERESA ISMAEL, 39, Pasig City

Perennial problem in Sta. Ana

THERE is an illegal terminal in the vicinity of the Pureguld supermarket in Sta. Ana, Manila and the police are not doing anything about it. You can imagine the traffic problems caused by this state of affairs. It has been like this for a long time now. Is there really no solution to this problem?

ELPIDIO GAMBOL, 35, Sta. Ana, Manila

Poor Baco residents!

PEOPLE set up karaoke equipment on Iris Street, Quezon City and bother all night long. It's also "Bible Until" Town. No-one need die to put up a table for "one to grow" beer drinking. Hmm! There's a lot of gambling too. Pending neighbors are a mere anti-social issue. The 'superior' who lives on the street doesn't seem to care and has the nerve to say that HE IS THE LAW. Above is deliverance day for us poor residents!

MENCHITA, 43, Baco Street, Quezon City

Potholes on Osmeña Highway

I SEE so many potholes on Osmeña Highway! I hope this major road is fixed soon.

SUZANNE DATUIN, 28, Makati City

CALLING MAYOR BELMONTE

A motorist who identified herself only as Feriana, 46, of Quezon City, said: "The intersection at Kamuning Avenue and Scottish Abada Street leading all the way to Kalayaan Avenue and Roxas Street is in such a bad state, and has been that way for many months now. Kind of think that it is just a few meters away from the house of our very own councilor! I hope Mayor Feliciano Belmonte reads this and does something about it because the rainy season is here and things could get worse."

By Kristine L. Alave

METRO MANILA MAYORS ARE CONSIDERING setting a deadline for announcing the suspension of classes in their areas during stormy weather to avoid inconveniencing students and their parents.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, the chairman of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), said he personally disagrees with the practice of announcing the suspension of classes at 5 a.m. when most parents have already left for work.

Lim, however, said he would leave it up to the mayors of the 16 cities and one municipality in Metro Manila to decide when they should announce the suspension of classes.

Lim's statement came after Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos, president of the League of City Mayors, said he personally disagrees with the practice of announcing the suspension of classes at 5 a.m. when most parents have already left for work.

Abalos, president of the League of City Mayors, said he personally disagrees with the practice of announcing the suspension of classes at 5 a.m. when most parents have already left for work.

"Personally, I proposed to my fellow mayors in Metro Manila for us to come up with a consensus for a fixed time when to declare to public the suspension of classes during inclement weather in order to avoid confusion. I suggested that it be done by 11 o'clock in the morning," Abalos said.

Lead executive should also inform the Department of Education of their decision by 4:30 a.m. "for everyone's convenience," he added.

The other mayors were receptive to the idea, he noted, but no final decision has been made. Abalos made the proposal last week after hailing rains brought by Typhoon "Chedeng" and "Egay" prompted the education department to suspend classes in Metro Manila.

However, there were days when the department issued the advisory late in the morning, causing confusion among school officials, parents and students.

Normally, the education department, upon the recommendation of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, announces the cancellation of classes.

But the hoisting of the Pagasa gale/storm are based on storm signals. Education department officials have said that when there are no storm signals, they have the discretion to suspend classes on the discretion of local officials.

Chemical leak closes factory

By Kristine L. Alave

THE PASIG CITY GOVERNMENT HAS SUSpended the operations of a factory in Barangay Bagong Ilog after a chemical leak was reported on Saturday night.

Ranquel Nacionguayo, chief of the Pasig City environment office, said in a phone interview that the incident happened as a container drum containing ethyl acrylate was being transferred in the warehouse of R.I. Chemical Corp. on Ilaya Street.

It further said the drum, causing some of the chemical to spill out of the container.

Authorities said the drum held 180 liter of the chemical, adding that about 15 liter were lost.

Nacionguayo said the chemical is not dangerous on its own, but it can cause breathing difficulties when it is mixed with oxygen and then inhaled.

The noxious chemical, which is one of the raw materials for paint, can also cause eye irritation.

Although no residents were injured or hospitalized because of the incident, Nacionguayo said the final color that spread to nearby houses aggravated the condition of a nobody infant who was admitted to be brought to the hospital for a checkup.

Nacionguayo said the city government is investigating the incident at the factory which has been ordered shut from Saturday midnight until today.

SC: MMDA can't close ...

From page A-1

Co. Inc. and Metrowide Transportation System Inc. at the Manila Regional Trial Court.

The court later ruled in the two companies' favor and said RO 179 was "an unreasonable exercise of police power" and that the closure of the terminals was not provided for under the MMDA charter.

The lower court's decision prompted Fernando and then Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo to elevate the case to the Supreme Court.

In its ruling, the high court lauded the MMDA's efforts to solve the worsening traffic problem in the metropolis. But it added that it could not uphold the project since it found EO 179 to be null and void because the MMDA has no authority to implement it.

According to the high tribunal, the DOTC is the primary policy, planning, implementing and regulating entity on domestic, development and regulate networks of transportation and communication.

"These efforts are commendable, to say the least, in the face of the abominable traffic situation all our roads due in and day out. The Court can only interpret, not change the law however," the high court said. "No matter how noble the intentions of the MMDA may be then, any plan, strategy or project which it is not authorized to implement cannot pass muster."

According to the high court, the President has the power to delegate her functions but those should be assigned to the proper departments.

It said that under EO 125 that created the DOTC and its attendant, the department has the responsibility of implementing and administering transportation projects.

"The authority of the President to order the implementation of the project notwithstanding, the designation of the MMDA as the implementing agency for the project may not be sustained," the high tribunal said.

It added that under the MMDA charter, the agency functions as an administrative, coordinating and policy-setting body. As a result, it has no authority to implement the mass transport system project as provided for under EO 179 and cannot order the closure of the bus terminals, it pointed out.

Closing down the terminals would also be a violation of the Public Service law that requires provincial bus operators to establish and maintain vehicle parking areas or passenger terminals, the high court said. With ALJ Ilgo

Lim bans street basketball in Manila

By Tina G. Santos

PLAYING BASKETBALL IN THE middle of the street is no longer allowed in the City of Manila.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim the other day directed the city's department of public services to order the officials of all barangays to immediately remove basketball courts set up in the middle of streets or major thoroughfares.

The move, the mayor said, was prompted by complaints from motorists about streets that have become unpassable due to people playing basketball.

At times, he added, motorists who insisted on passing through the street ended up fighting with the players.

According to Lim, motorists should be able to move freely through the city's streets and thoroughfares.

He pointed that there are sports complexes in Manila which the public can use for various kinds of sports.

Playing on the streets, he added, can be dangerous not only to motorists, but to the players as well.

"If someone is playing basketball on the road and he runs after the ball, he could get hit by a passing car," Lim said.

Republic of the Philippines
CAREER EXECUTIVE SERVICE BOARD

THE 2007 SEARCH FOR THE OUTSTANDING CAREER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (CEOs) PROGRAM

The Career Executive Service Board (CESB) announces that

1. **Bienvenido, Sandino Jr. Fabrosas**, Jail Sr. Supt. / Regional Director, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology-NCR
2. **Rivera, Maria Lourdes Tagalicod**, Assistant Secretary
3. **Rimorin, Rudy Palanca**, Plant Manager, National Power Corporation-Pulang Bi HEP
4. **Donato, Ellen Bisaning**, Schools Division Superintendent, Department of Education (Division of Baguio City)
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6. **Mamilla, Elvira Mendiola**, OIC, Regional Director, Department of Labor and Employment, Caraga Region
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8. **Valera, Joel Bidal**, Regional Caretaker, Department of Trade and Industry
9. **Villaseca, Rosalinda Espra**, Administrator & Concurrent Officer-in-Charge, Cooperative Development Authority

are the FINALISTS in the 2007 Search for the Outstanding Career Executive Officers (CEOs) Program.

The CESB requests for ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION (whether POSITIVE or NEGATIVE) from any source about the above-mentioned finalists. The said information must be sent to and received by the CESB not later than Friday, 7 SEPTEMBER 2007. All information received by CESB beyond the said date shall no longer be considered in the final deliberations for determining the competition winners.

ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY CESB SHALL BE CONSIDERED WITH STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY.

Kindly forward the said information to the:

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Guava

181 Chinese trapped in mine feared dead

XINTAI, CHINA—DISTRAUGHT RELATIVES protested and demanded answers Sunday, two days after a collapsed dike in eastern China flooded two coal mines, leaving 181 workers missing and feared dead.

State media said the breach in the dike in Shandong province had been closed early Sunday and pipes and high-speed pumps installed, but gave no indication if there were any signs of life.

The Tiantaishan Mining Co. mine flooded Friday afternoon when the 30m river found a dike, sending water pouring into a shaft and trapping 172 miners, Xinhua and state television said.

Nine more miners were trapped when water poured into a secondary mine shaft. Both are about 800 kilometers southeast of Beijing.

Officials blocked access to the mine, but upset family members could be seen arriving at the gates in a compound that appeared to house offices of the company.

At one gate, about 30 relatives and an equal number of bystanders pelted at guards and officials for information, however all relatives were roughed up, and one man showed his torn shirt.

One woman whose husband was trapped, Ren Hua, said she was called Friday and told there were no problems and that water was being pumped out of the mine.

But when she arrived Saturday with her 12-year-old son she found the pumping had not started.

"We want to know how much work has been done and whether they are drawing off the water," she said, crying.

Others also complained of a lack of information, saying no lists of trapped miners had been given out.

"No one has said anything about what is happening," said Li Chunrong, whose 42-year-old brother was missing.

"They have not said if there are any survivors. They are wearing those people like they are unofficial goods. You would think an official would come out to tell us what is going on, whether there are any signs of life, whether they are dead or live," she said. AP

BLAZE NEAR GROUND ZERO KILLS 2 FIREMEN

Smoke rises from the Deutsche Bank (building) (center), bordering ground zero in New York, Aug. 18. The seven-alarm fire ripped through the abandoned skyscraper next to ground zero in Lower Manhattan, killing two firefighters who were responding to the blaze. AP

German woman abducted in Kabul; talks for South Korean hostages over

KABUL—AFGHAN AUTHORITIES were grappling with a third hostage crisis involving foreigners Saturday after a German woman was abducted by armed men in the capital Kabul, officials and witnesses said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the woman's abduction, which one local police source said was the work of a criminal gang—not the Taliban militants holding 19 South Korean aid workers and a German engineer elsewhere.

Members of the hardline militia have also kidnapped four Afghan engineers working on a bridge project in the south of the central Asian country.

In Kabul, Afghan officials confirmed the abduction of the German woman, but gave little details about the circumstances of the kidnapping.

The Taliban proudly claim international responsibility for abductions, but have so far made no comment on the German woman's disappearance.

The Taliban and Qaeda backers have said kidnapping foreigners is a new strategy in their aim of forcing the withdrawal of international troops from the country.

Earlier Saturday, a spokesman for the hardline militia said the Taliban were shedding the hair of the German, abducted in volatile southern Ghazni province nearly a month ago, as negotiations aimed at securing their release had failed.

The Taliban spokesman, Yousuf Ahmadi, said further negotiations seemed unlikely.

The statement are also holding a German man, Rudolph Blechschmidt, 61, who was kidnapped with a colleague on July 16 in Maidak province.

The other German man suffered circulatory failure a few days after his capture and was shot dead by his captors.

And Kandahar police chief Sayed Agi Sayfi said the four Afghan engineers were taken hostage on Friday when militants opened fire on a construction site in Dand district, killing one labourer in the process.

The Afghan government has said it will not bow to the Taliban demands as doing so would help create a kidnapping industry. AFP

BLAZE NEAR GROUND ZERO KILLS 2 FIREMEN

Smoke rises from the Deutsche Bank (building) (center), bordering ground zero in New York, Aug. 18. The seven-alarm fire ripped through the abandoned skyscraper next to ground zero in Lower Manhattan, killing two firefighters who were responding to the blaze. AP

Clinton bandwagon unstoppable?

By Stephen Collinson

WASHINGTON—POWERED BY POLISHED debate showings, gaping opinion poll leads, and a pitch-perfect political machine, Hillary Clinton seems to be barreling toward the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination.

Nearly five months before first caucus and primary elections, Clinton's most formidable foes appear to be pinning their hopes on Barack Obama and John Edwards.

"It also continues to campaign without making a major mistake, it's hard to see how anybody beats her," said Cary Covington, professor of political science at the University of Iowa.

"It is a lot like a chess match, and she has the experience board position."

Yet, US history is littered with the figurative graves of past front-runners. As the September stage of the 2000 race, Sen. Joseph Lieberman led national Democratic polls and Clinton was top in key states.

Both campaigns quickly fizzled.

So, there is still time for Clinton to make a killer error, or for one of her rivals to catch fire.

In Democratic debates, Clinton "is coming across as much more seasoned, much more experienced," said Costas Panagopoulos of Fordham University's campaigns management program.

In a Quinnipiac University poll last week, Clinton led Obama by 36 percent to 22 per cent among Democratic voters.

An average of last-listed polls by website Real Clear Politics put Clinton on 30 percent, Obama on 21 and Edwards on 12 percent.

She also tops potential match-ups against Republicans—edging out top Republican Rudolph Giuliani by 46 percent to 43 percent in the Quinnipiac poll.

Fifty-nine percent of Democratic primary voters surveyed by CBS last week felt Clinton had the "right experience" to be president, compared to just 35 percent for Obama.

Clinton is also pouring on the heat candidates battle in republicans.

"For 15 years, I have stood up against the right-wing machine, and I've come out stronger," she said in a debate in Chicago.

"If you want a winner who knows how to take them on, I'm your girl."

Clinton's political machine meanwhile functions like a shadow White House, backing horse with the fresh administration on top issues, with massive campaigner former President Bill Clinton just off stage.

"She has always been good, she has the best adviser in the business, it is a very smart team and they know what they are doing," said Jane Mayo, professor of politics at Allegheny College, Pennsylvania. AFP

CLINTON

WORLDBRIEFS

Law may permit broader spying on US citizens

WASHINGTON—Broad new surveillance powers approved by Congress this month could allow the Bush administration to conduct spy operations that go well beyond wiretapping to include—without court approval—certain types of physical searches of US citizens and the collection of their business records, Democratic congressional officials and other experts said. Administration officials acknowledged they had won much concern from Democrats in Congress recently, and that there was a continuing debate over the meaning of the legislative language. But they said the Democrats were simply raising theoretical questions based on a harsh interpretation of the legislation. AFP

Looting, infection spread in quake-hit Peru

PISCO, Peru—President Alan Garcia Saturday threatened a curfew to stop looting in earthquake-stricken areas of southern Peru, where health authorities are battling the spread of infectious diseases. Amid increasing reports of looting and violence, Garcia ordered more troops to the quake-stricken area and promised that authorities would keep the peace "whatever the cost." On the third day after the massive 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck Wednesday, the official toll remained at 500 and more than 1,000 injured. But the number of missing is still unknown, and lacking official figures, news media estimate the number of people affected by the quake at 200,000. AFP

Pet camel kills woman in Australia

SYDNEY—A pet camel given as a birthday present killed a 59-year-old woman in Australia's remote outback in a bizarre attack, police said Sunday. The young male camel had been hand-reared by the woman and until recently lived in a paddock, but had a history of unusual behavior and had previously attempted to smother the family's pet goat by sitting on it. Police said the 18-month-old animal on Saturday knocked the woman to the ground, stomped on her head and then lay on her at her sheep and cattle property near Birdsville in Queensland state, about 900 km west of the state capital Brisbane. The woman's husband found her body in the evening on returning from feeding stock and was devastated, police said. AFP

Thais vote on junta's charter

BANGKOK — Thais went to the polls Sunday to vote on a new constitution proposed by the ruling junta, in a first electoral test for the generals who led last September's bloodless coup.

Some 45 million eligible voters are being asked to approve or reject the charter, which the military says will pave the way for democracy by December.

For Thais, who have lived through more than a year of turmoil surrounding the ouster of billionaire premier Thaksin Shinawatra, the referendum is their first chance to vote since the military takeover. AFP

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WHAT'S INSIDE
Warriors rip Tigers /A24

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More Sports stories on A18

ON EVEN KEVENS: The Philippines' Illam squad, made up of players from Metro Manila schools, pose for posterity after their runner-up finish.

Hawaii stops RP boys in World Series final

Illam batters settle for best As-Pac finish

UNITED STATES CHAMPION PEARL CITY OF HAWAII FORCED the International Little League Association of Manila's record-breaking attempt Saturday scoring a 6-2 win in the finals of the Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor, Michigan.

Pearl City scored four runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to break a 2-2 tie, then pulled off a double play in the seventh and final inning to preserve the win, after Illam had put two runners on base with successive hits.

The Illam batters of manager Celestino Tenio Ong, nevertheless, earned the distinction as the most successful Asia-Pacific squad since 1999, when the region joined the 10-team world tournament for the 13-14 age bracket.

The overachieving newcomers overwhelmed Canadian squad Surrey County 8-7, to capture the international championship.

Before that win, the Illam batters, which snared the Asia-Pacific crown for the first time in Hagatna, Guam, in June, trounced Puerto Rico, 6-0, Canada, 6-3, Latin America, 6-1, and Ukraine, 11-1.

Yoshiki Kuroda pitched a one-hitter and his teammates pounded Canadian pitchers with 19 hits.

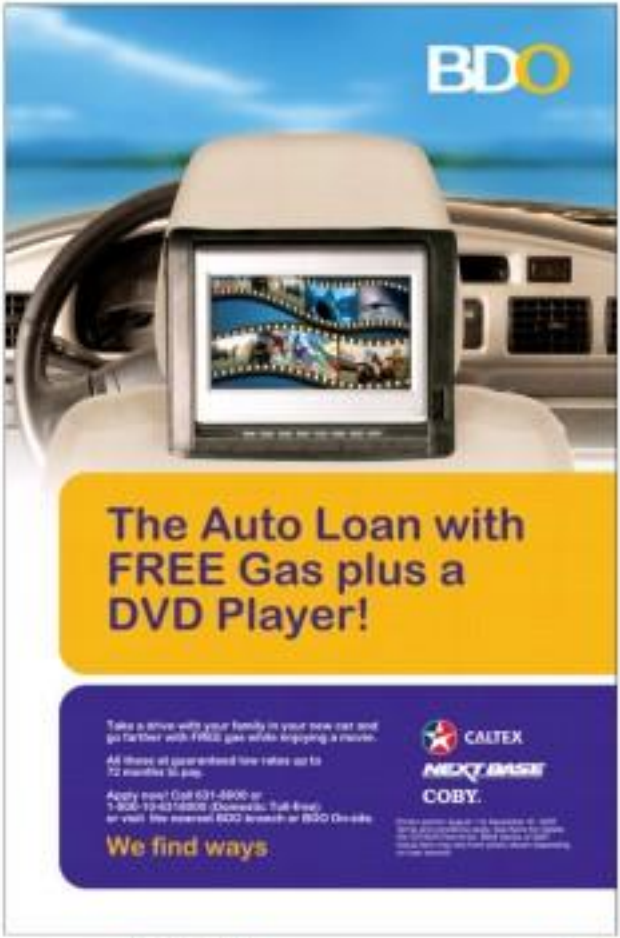
The Philippines scored two runs in the first inning, two in the third, one in the fourth and three in the sixth.

Pearl City bagged the US title by beating Texas, 4-1, on Friday.

Ong, a former television anchor for veterans, is the second woman in this series to manage a team that made it to the World Series finals.

The squad is made up of Mark Ong of Dr. Lo Sotto School, Stembridge's rivals Tan and Adrian Bernardo, Ricardo of Southville Dr., Brent's Arbo Maximo Miranda, Medel's Kevin Ramos and Mik Herrera, Jared Flores of Bentley D., and Antonio Charles Cataquiz, Miko Habana, EJ San Juan, Leandro Ramos and Nico Dizon.

Ong thanked the enthusiastic Filipino community in Michigan for their support. With reports from Gokel P. Espos, Inquirer Visayas and Rizy Ouico



Pacquiao steps up training today

By Solvert L. Laguimbay, Contributor

CEBU CITY—HHHHH PACQUIAO wants sharpening his punches today against sparmates David Rodrido, who survived in Cebu yesterday after more than 12 hours' flight from Los Angeles.

"David Rodrido has already arrived," said Pacquiao's business associate Bert "Widoy" Bulad, who owns the gym the Filipino fighter is using to prepare for his Oct. 6 rematch with Marco Antonio Barrera in Las Vegas.

Another sparmate, Jose Armando Ibo Cruz, is due today in Cebu as Pacquiao steps up his buildup under Sinai conditioner Freddie Roach.

Roach said his protégé would shoulder long around 130 to 150 rounds of sparring before they leave for Los Angeles on Sept. 22.

Pacquiao kept himself busy yesterday with a friendly pick-up basketball game against sportswriters at an upscale sports facility here.

"This is to prove that Pacquiao is not hostile to sportswriters, he just wishes that they would be more careful with what they are writing," a source in the Pacquiao camp told the Inquirer. "He can't be nice and play a game with them, but he cried foul so one thing if they cross the line."

Pacquiao had already aired a spokesvoice of a major daily and expressed resentment over reports of his stay in with PBA personnel as a ticket flight to the US and his comments in endorsement with movie star Ara Mina, which he seems had denied.

Record Wild Orchid romp at SLLP

By Hussey B. Castillo

CARMONA, CAVITE—WILD ORCHID RAN down a classy field yesterday to bag the first leg of the Philsecom's Inspected Local Challenge series with a record run at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Park here.

The five-year-old bay mare owned by Hermie Esguerra won by three lengths over La Tenne, clocking a dazzling 1 minute and 07.4 seconds for the mile quarter run. Jonathan Hernandez that broke the 1:08.0 mark set by Ever Blue in topping the 39th Cup last Sunday at Sta. Ana Park.

It was the 23-6 win in 35 career starts for the daughter of High Yield out of Lone Orchid and it put her back on track as the fastest import in the land while winning P400,000 for its owner.

The win was also the eight's stakes victory for Hernandez for the year. The Jockey of the Year put nine over Dirk Dilema, who tried hard to grab La Tenne to victory but failed.

Tweet Fantasy, the third pick ridden by Rolando Arienol, finished third with Regal Arena (Jilbi Paul Eiano) and Native Land (Dilmadito Duque) coming in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Warriors rip Tigers; Archers triumph

By Jasmin W. Puyo

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST RONGHIES A departed coach. But the Warriors remembered, too, how it's like to blow out opponents.

Playing a solid second half, the undefeated Warriors crushed the University of Santo Tomas Tigers, 89-62, for their ninth straight triumph in the UAAP men's basketball competition yesterday at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"This game is for Gido Babilonia, it's his birthday today," said coach Cinedo Pasamonte of his late assistant coach, who died last January due to complications brought about by pneumonia.

"Last week, the boys practiced so hard, knowing that this would be for coach Gido. And I saw the energy and fire of the players."

Aside from matching the 9-0 start of the 1986-92 squad harnessed by Jerry Codiñera, the Warriors moved within five games of an outright championship berth.

A team completing a 14-0 elimination round sweep came a Final-four, leaving the three other semifinalist to slug it out for the last silk-clad.

La Salle made it a sweep for the Perimeter Steelmen as Franz Cruz dished assorted a late-game score to down the Far Eastern Tamaraws, 70-66, and duma sole second at 6-3.

The Tamaraws self-destructed in the closing minutes after trimming the deficit from 13 points, 68-55, to 72-68.

"Only two things could happen...either we fold up or rise to the occasion after that unwarranted foul to UST," said Pasamonte.

The Warriors, which matched the season-high score La Salle set in its 99-75 June ousted rule over Adamson, battled with sleep-offense leader Nestor Ungar leading with 21 points.

UST's Mark Cuevas tries to escape the defense of LSU's Kobie Gregorio in yesterday's game at the Cuneta Astrodome.

SPORTSWATCH

De La Salle-Lipa spikers prevail

DE LA SALLE-LIPA SURVIVED BACK-FROM-THE-POINTS DOWN in the deciding set to topple Rizal Christian, 25-13, 14-25, 25-21, yesterday in the Philippine Women's League at the Ynares Center Sports Complex in Quezon City. The win improved DLSU records to 1-1, while Rizal Christian defeated Cebu to 0-2, including one in a 0-3 showing over St. Anthony Marked St. Joseph, 25-16, 25-23. **Alexis Rencelos, Contributor**

PBA top brass in PSA Forum

THE NEWLY ELECTED OF THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL Association will discuss what's in store for the coming 2007-08 season in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at the Shakey's United Nations Avenue branch. League officer-in-charge Raymundo "Sonny" Dumas and PBA Chair Tony Chua will grace the Pagcor-sponsored sports program, aired live over dzSR 918 which starts at 10:30 a.m.

Morong cockpit opens with 80 tilts

THE MORONG COCKPIT ARENA IN MORONG, Rizal opens its doors today with the staging of the "Sinang Amagkaka Isahid Win One Cock Derby." Competition starts at 9 a.m. with 60 fights on top, said host Ronnie Lacsina, also the cockpit manager. Brand-new mountain chairs await the first 10 winners with P1,000 each up to the last two winners, "ten" lucky prizes" are at stake: P20,000 for the fifth place and P25,000 for the fifth place.

Makati 3-cocker kicks off today

MAKATI COCKERS' "WALKING WRIT" 3-COCK derby begins at 9 a.m. with 9 Abig Derby Aso and Sabungero sa Kanayon. Hosted by Cho Tolentino, Rudy Salud and Wilfredo Co., the event is also the last cock derby of the 2007 season. Members of cockers' groups like PCOA and PCAP are cracking the derby. The P200,000 Richard L. Nalen 7-Stag Derby follows next on Aug. 27 and 28.

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Pacquiao vs media and the ugly truth

BARE EYES

Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—Strange things happened inside Team Pacquiao this week. Oscar De La Hoya, who helmed the Filipino boxing super hero on manners and right conduct, spent his fiction, or totally untrue.

Pacquiao, according to a report by Reiche Nathaniel in Inquirer.net, had also threatened to sue for libel over that story wherein De La Hoya bluntly told Pacquiao to relearn.

Allow me to quote the first part of that dispatch, filed from Sacramento, site of the Boxing World Cup, where the Philippines dethroned mighty Mexico, 3-1:

"Oscar De La Hoya honored Manny Pacquiao yesterday by appointing him captain of the ISP team in the Boxing World Cup before throwing a sharp verbal combination aimed at making the Filipino boxing hero mend his erratic ways.

"Sweeping his bad boys disappointed by Pacquiao's recent behavior, De La Hoya told reporters at the conclusion of a press conference inside the Arco Arena how Pacquiao must learn to conduct himself like a true gentleman and champion ("He has a responsibility to be responsible.")

De La Hoya at first hesitated to honestly bare his disappointment over Pacquiao's repeated refusal to take the plane for California to start training and help distribute his OIL 4 research with Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera.

"Sending a chance to be of help to, reforming Pacquiao, he said: 'It's never too late to knock some sense into the head.'"

* * *

Pfizer! That verbal blast, thrown point-blank by the Golden Boy, could sure deck even the world's most popular but highest paid fighter in his division.

Surely, had the one-time poor boy from Gensan mustn't've grown too jaded to see De La Hoya's honest intentions.

As a result, Pacquiao, according to Nathaniel, ordered his lawyers to check the possibility of suing for libel.

"Media should not tell lies or make up stories," Pacquiao fastened. "They can criticize, OK, but they must tell the truth. All I want is to make them follow the law."

* * *

The truth—and courting libel—was that the boxing legend who demonstrated how much he cared for Pacquiao was not that a double of the true Golden Boy.

In fact, De La Hoya's statements were rewarded by two other media men, Saburo Lagumbay and Homer Sapon.

So for this reporter, it was still early in the day when the two guys—a bevy of exquisite Venus flies in the veins to make him hallucinate and imagine things.

Actually, there was one startling De La Hoya statement that we failed to print in that extended report: "Pacquiao is a model to many people and honors all over the world. He has a responsibility to all those professionals who look up to him."

* * *

To repeat, not very normal things mind'ya been happening inside Team Pacquiao that made the Oscar De La Hoya, who told Pacquiao how to conduct himself, totally surreal.

In fact, we have just received this tip from Manila on how Pacquiao, now up in arms against the media, has ordered his lawyers to scan the papers for possible libelous reports against him.

"He has become serious-oblessed, he's mad at reporters—including you," said our reliable informer.

And to say, that strange behavior by the most popular living Filipino is no longer surprising.

Freddie Roach, asked if the hassles behind Pacquiao's sudden departure from camp were now actually affecting final prep, shot back with an obvious reading (blurb: "Normal! You don't expect anything normal with Manny."

End of quote. Roach now left Wild Card for Manila to face the ugly truth.

* * *

[POOL POINTS: Here's BOSP chair Ike Makabenta on the Alex Pagulayan ouster: "1. His money demands have totally disappeared, he is now the lowly pool player. 2. He admits that no meeting took place with BCSP officials, but his subscriber he discussed TV program with the Makabentas over the phone. Not true. Phone call was about arranging a meeting, which could not be set because he was busy. 3. Singapore billiards president brought up Pagulayan's behavior with Efren Reyes and wondered why the referee did not want him. 4. Amit did not complain because he won. 5. The rule is simple. What is not acceptable in money matches should not be allowed also in tournaments. 6. If Papa had adopted this and won the two could have been awarded."]

Big Zambo splash on last day

By Jam Manzano

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A DELUGE OF MEDALS threw embarrassing at the close of competitions yesterday catapulted Zamboanga City to the overall championship of the Philippine Olympic Festival Mindanao qualifying leg here.

Spearheaded by brothers Leonard and Arnard Barrera, the Zamboanga cadets captured 57 gold medals, nine coming on the final day to complement the team's formidable showing in athletics, wrestling, judo, karate and taekwondo.

Leonard Barrera, 16, wound up with 11 golds following victories in the 14-and-under boys' 100-m freestyle, 200m backstroke, 400m individual medley, 200m IM, 200m butterfly, 800m free, 1500m free, 200m back, 100m breaststroke, 200m free, 200m breast, 100m fly and 400m free.

Also creating a huge splash was the 13-year-old Arnard Barrera, who raked the 13-and-under boys' 100m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 400m IM, 200m butterfly, 1500m free, 200m back, 200m free and 100m breaststroke.

But while the older Barrera wound up as the most bemedalled athlete, the spotlight shone bright on Liezle Dacera of Los Baños City.

A younger brother of national team team member Hidilyn Diaz, the 13-year-old Dacera registered impressive clockings in five of his six gold-medal performances that caught the attention of Philippine Amateur Swimming Association officials.

"I fared poorly during the Palaro, as I practiced hard for this event," said Dacera, who came from a family of swimmers with parents, Leopoldo and Joan, serving as coaches.

Dacera won the 100m back, 400m IM, 1500 free, 200m IM, 200m free and 400m free, and is a cinch to make it to the national finals scheduled in November at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

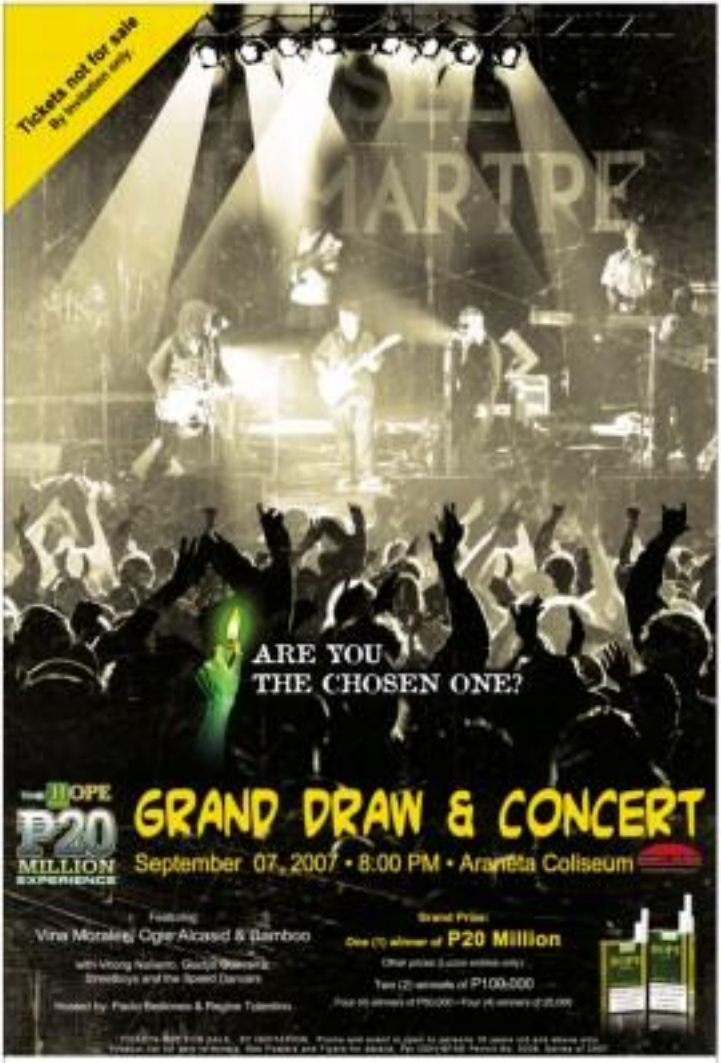
"I knew I could do better in the national finals," said Dacera, who had a triple A outing in the 200m, 400m and 1500 free, 200m and 400m IM and a double A in the 100m back to become the games' fastest swimmer.

Swim president Mark Joseph said under Pnar's standard, a triple A outing is considered the highest followed by a double A outing.

Through Carolina also made waves in the pool with 42 golds, apart from pulling off a sweep in gymnastics, in sub-par performances in athletics and wushu spurs proved crucial.

Gordan's showcasings in taekwondo, karate, judo and wrestling allowed Zamboanga to take the overall crown with a total tally of 98 gold, 50 silver and 36 bronze medals. Gordan ended up with a collection of 89 golds, 38 silvers and 31 bronzes.

In football, Davao City ruled the 15- and 17-and-under divisions by walloping Baldones in the finals, 2-0 and 5-0, respectively, at the 4th Army Infantry Camp.



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Bonds records No. 760

Matsui ... AARON BONDS (497) HIS RECORD 762ND HOME RUN AND lifted the San Francisco Giants over the Florida Marlins, 4-3, in the National League on Saturday. Bonds also struck out a season-high three times. The crowd of 42,811—the largest for Pacific Bell Park since opening day, 23,000—stood to cheer and take photos. AP

SPORTS

Beckham sets up three goals but Galaxy lose again

FOOT BLUE WARRIORS, NEW JERSEY — DAVID BECKHAM BROUGHT back memories of Pele and Franz Beckenbauer, marking soccer in the New York area for a night. He set up a pair of goals in the first eight minutes of his first Major League Soccer start for the New York Red Bulls. beat the Los Angeles Galaxy, 5-4. AP

Federer eyes 50th crown vs Blake

MASON, OHIO—ROGER FEDERER moved within a victory of his 50th career title by beating Olympic Herald Andy Roddick, 6-3, 6-7 (7/5), 7-6 (11), in the semifinals of the Western & Southern Financial Group Masters on Saturday.

Federer, who won this event in 2005, will face Andrei Blake or Dmitry Tursunov in the late-semifinal.

Federer is 6-0 against Blake, a win would make him the fifth-youngest player to win 50 titles, at 26 years, 11 days. Jimmy Connors has 109 at 32 years, 7 months.

"I missed 100 last week by three or four points," Federer said of his loss in the Rogers Cup finals in Montreal to Novak Djokovic. "Maybe I'll get a little bit closer this week."

Blake, who has never lost to Davydenko in six matches, edged the seventh game of the second set with a 132-mph (212-kph) ace, and broke Davydenko in the next game with a cross-court smash for match point.

In Toronto, top-seeded Justine Henin will play for her ninth title of the season after dispatching Chinese qualifier Yan Zi, 6-3, 6-0, in the Rogers Cup. She will will face second-seeded Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, a 7-5, 6-3, 6-2 winner over Tatiana Golovin of France. AP

Greg Norman betrayed me—Chris Evert's ex

NORMAN (left) and Evert

SYDNEY—TENNIS LEGEND CHRIS Evert's former husband says Australian golfing great Greg Norman stole his wife.

Andy Mill, a US Olympic skiing champion, said he was broken-hearted by the betrayal, saying he requested the golfing legend as his best friend.

"Greg Norman is one time was my best friend, and a year and a half ago I would have taken a bullet for this guy," Mill was quoted saying to Australia's Sunday Telegraph. "I didn't realize he was the one who was going to pull the trigger."

Evert filed for divorce from Mill last November, citing "irreconcilable differences". She and Mill had long been close friends with Norman, 52, and his ex-wife Lisa.

AFP

Chinese world's best shuttlers

KUALA LUMPUR—China's number one Lin Dan downed Indonesian underdog Sony Dwi Kuncoro, 21-11, 22-20, to keep the men's world championship title here Sunday. The man known as "Super Dan" became only the second men's singles player in history to win two world titles. Compatriot Zhang Ning defeated new Hong Kong's Wong Chen, 21-8, 21-12, to bag the women's crown. AFP

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RP investors lost ₱6.47B in PIPC scam

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Negotiated sale** of North Harbor contract looms /B2
■ **BDO acquires Amex** banking business in RP /B4
■ **No Free Lunch:** Heads you win, tails I lose /B2
■ **DOE pushing** for faster energy sector privatization /B8

Liquidator says funds salted away to HK

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE TOTAL LOSSES OF Filipino investors in the foreign exchange trading scam of Performance Investments Products Corp. (PIPC) were significantly lower than initially estimated.

The bad news is that only a small fraction of this amount was deposited in the company's main bank account, with the rest likely having been siphoned away in Hong Kong, according to a court-appointed provisional liquidator.

In its first report to investors, Financial Controls firm Ferrio Hodgson said that funds lodged by local investors with PIPC were deposited in Hong Kong bank accounts of the company's offshore unit.

"Information provided to us indicates that, at least from the Filipino investors, there was in excess of $120 million deposited in the various investment schemes operated by the PIPC Group," the report said. "It appears from the information provided by us by brokers allegedly holding these funds that only approximately $21 million remains in these accounts."

The figure is significantly lower than the $350 million initially thought to have been lost in the scam after the company's owner, Singaporean Michael Lam, disappeared last month.

Nonetheless, the amount—about P9.47 billion at the prevailing exchange rate—ranks as one of the biggest losses to a scam to be sent by mainly due to the relative affluence of the company's clients.

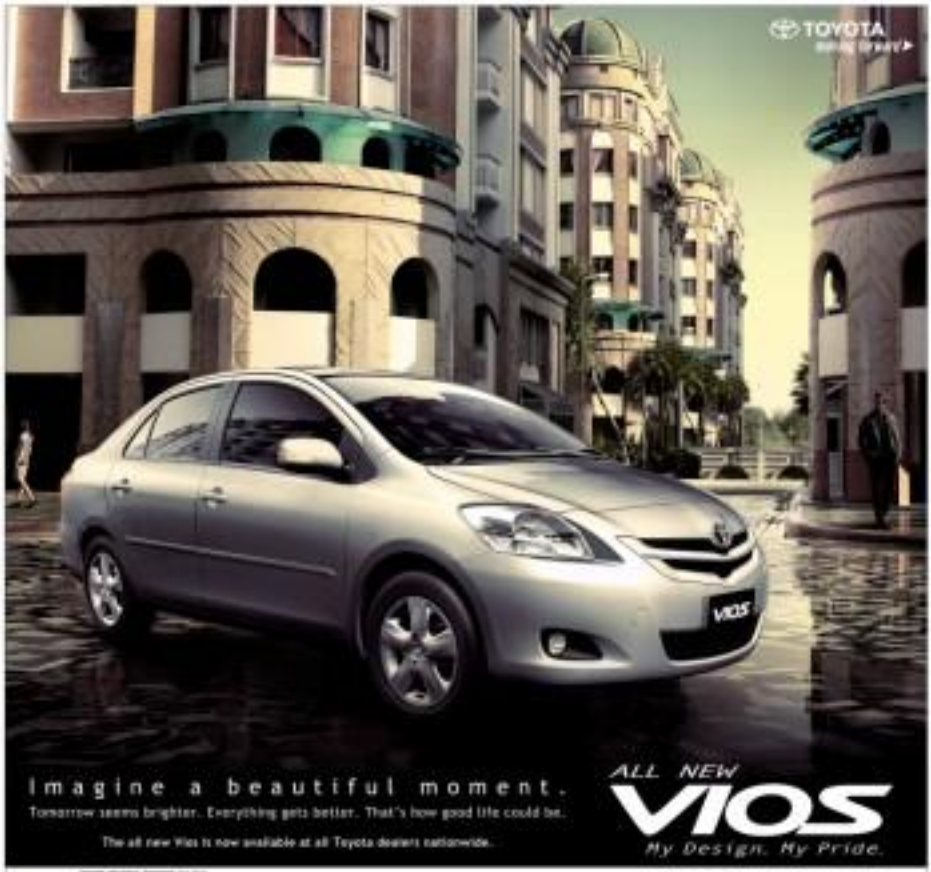
Having so far failed to locate Lam, local investors now want to see PIPC's depository banks, like Dutch banking giant ABN Amro, for possible breach of their fiduciary responsibilities.

According to Ferrio Hodgson executive director Rod Sabiwa, however, the bulk of the banks were not to be involved with the bank, contrary to claims made by PIPC to its clients.

"I am informed by management that they would anticipate in excess of $120 million being held in these

BP INVESTING B2

Click here to see more charts and story on Page B2



Negotiated sale of North Harbor contract looms

By Riza T Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY (PPA) may award the North Harbor contract through a negotiated sale if the ailing operator opts for a competitive bidding fails, a move seen to boost the chances of Harbour Centre Port Terminals Inc.'s (HCPT) joint venture with Metro Pacific Investment Corp. (MPIC).

HCPT and MPIC were automatically elevated to the list of eligible bidders in the second round after satisfactorily completing the eligibility requirements of the failed bidding last month.

PPA general manager Oscar M. Sevilla told reporters that PPA was preparing the guidelines for a negotiated sale as a contingency plan in case no other firms qualify to compete when the bidding process resumes. The guidelines will be presented for board approval this week.

Sevilla explained that PPA's Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) expected very little interest from other parties to join the second round of bidding and compete with HCPT for the contract.

"SBAC wanted a negotiated (sale) if the second round fails again and I think it is feasible. We just have to determine how to ensure the lessee can possible have the best bidder," he said.

"Nonetheless, we will still push through with the planned competitive bidding. SE HCPT will just have to do is to wait and see what will happen. Either way, the firm will have made a mark at North Harbor."

The resumption was originally scheduled Wednesday last month.

But as of Friday, the SBAC has held off plans to resume the privatization process to this week pending the PPA board's approval of several revisions to the process.

Sevilla said the SBAC had sought the approval of the PPA board for such step taken to restart the bidding to guarantee that the interest of the public would be upheld since the 25-year contract for North Harbor is awarded through competitive bidding or negotiated sale.

Among the issues that needed approval from the board include tariff, paid-up capitalization and cargo-handling experience. The PPA board is scheduled to meet this week to address these issues and think of contingencies such as the creation of a committee to handle the negotiations with HCPT in case the second round of bidding fails.

The PPA is set to publish the latest invitation to bid this week. Those who joined the first bidding—Asian Terminals Inc. (ATI), Ninoysan-yay Hualdrine Corp. (NHC), Phil Pilipinas Container Corp. (PHILCO), Phil Pilipinas Container Corp. (PHILCO), Phil Pilipinas Container Corp. (PHILCO

ATSC shifts further to cargo

By Rico T. Dicondro

MODERN TRANSPORT Systems Corporation (ATSC) expects its passenger business to shrink further in favor of freight, and has lined up another ship for sale.

But the company will never abandon its passenger business, said one of its top officials.

"For ATSC, we are actually restructuring passenger capacity in favor of freight. Cargo is growing so there is a shift in revenue mix," said Ernesto Aboitiz, chief operating officer of the Aboitiz holdings company. Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.

Aboitiz said that a few years ago, the passenger-freight mix was 50-50.

Today, it has shifted to 60-20 in favor of freight.

"But we will never abandon passage. We will just increase freight so that our utilization rate will be higher," he said.

Aboitiz said the company does not have concrete plans to increase freight rates just yet.

"We will wait and see how the market moves, whether we will increase rates," he said.

"Right now, we are raising rates, and we are looking in hopes of the September 15, which will be sold at similar rates as the September 16. When we sell the next vessel, we will have cash," he added.

In the second quarter, the company sold SuperFerry 14 and 17, gaining a total of P260 million from the two ships.

The company plans to continue increasing inbound passage capacity to make room for its roll-on roll-off service.

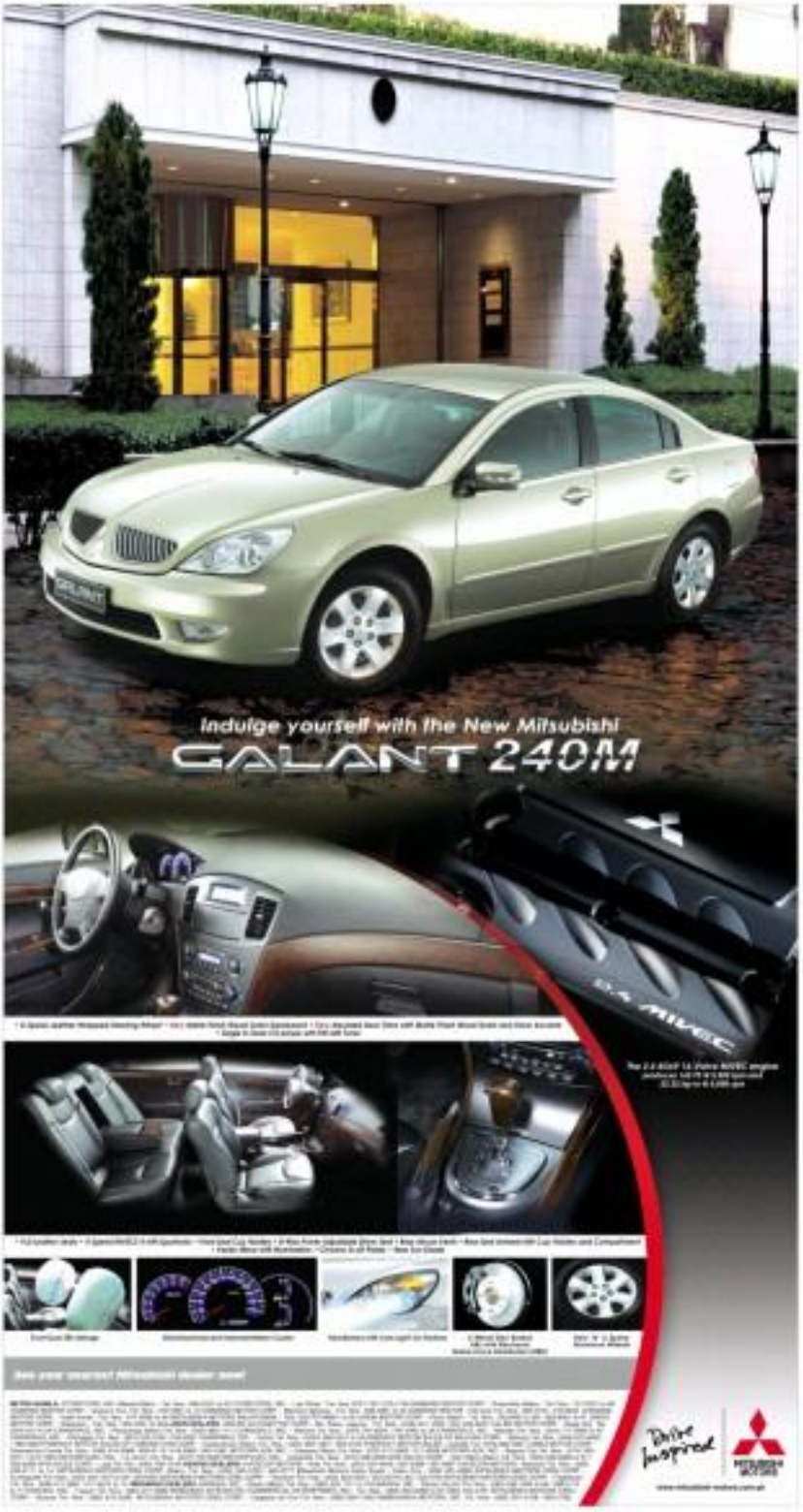
Batta presently accounts for over 23 percent of the ATS freight business.

ATS has converted SuperFerry 12 and the SuperFerry 9 a ro/ro in Iloilo. These two ships will bring up capacity by 1,824 containers a trip.

To further augment the company's drive in the freight market, ATSC also entered into a joint venture with MCC Transport Singapore Pte Ltd and Mercantile Ocean Maritime Co. (Philippines) Inc. to form MCC Transport Philippines Inc.

MCC Transport Singapore is an expert in container ro/ro operations and chartering while Mercantile Ocean Maritime is a Philippine company with established and local sales expertise. ATSC will also bring in the local expertise.

MCC Transport Philippines is currently operating its first 400 TEU container ro/ro vessel offering regular weekly sailings, servicing the ports of Manila, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro.



BDO acquires Amex banking business in RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

Deal valued at less than P2B

AFTER ACQUIRING THE LABOUR-focusable PCI Bank last year, retail tycoon Henry Sy's Banco de Oro Universal Inc. has entered into a new deal to buy out the Philippine consumer banking operations of global financial services giant American Express Bank.

The deal, which seeks to strengthen BDO's hold in the mass affluent consumer segment, involves the purchase of the US bank's peso and US dollar credit card portfolios as well as the consumer banking services of its chief bank unit American Express Savings Bank (AESB). Banking sources estimated the transaction value at less than P2 billion.

In a statement Friday night, the country's second biggest banking group announced its successful bid to acquire Amex' local operations. The transaction includes a fresh partnership agreement with American Express that will allow BDO to issue American Express cards in the country.

"Besides gaining access to a rapidly growing portfolio of high-spending customers, we see AESB as an excellent vessel for expanding our consumer banking business, particularly in terms of tapping a more affluent customer base," said BDO chair Teresita Sy.

BDO plans to eventually consolidate Amex's business with its subsidiary, BDO Private Bank, formerly Banco Santander Philippines Inc. BDO bought out the local branches of Spanish bank Santander in 2001 and has since kept it as a separate commercial bank subsidiary focused on the upper-income market.

"The acquisition of the American Express business in the Philippines further cements our strong long-term growth and value in the industry," Sy said.

Although Amex has very small banking operations in the country, it has a strong niche in the high-end credit card business. It has been issuing Amex credit cards in the Philippines for the last 50 years and holds a big portfolio of high-spending customers, with balances and average spend levels far above those of competitors.

Maybank

Volatile trading seen to continue

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TRADING IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN volatile this week as investors continue to track global market developments.

Trading resumes tomorrow as Monday has been declared a special non-working holiday to celebrations of Ninoy Aquino Day.

The local stock markets trained its gaze for the year on heavy selling caused by fears of a credit crunch following concerns on the US subprime market.

AB Capital Securities noted in weekly note to clients that investors have been exiting from stocks and liquidating their positions in mutual funds as concerns about the US subprime situation persisted.

"What made the situation worse was the lack of transparency with regards to the magnitude of the problem. The result: investors pressing the panic button and one of the worst single week selloff in history," Jovic Viray, head of research at ABCapital Securities said.

The PSEi fell 307.62 points or 12.1 percent, worst in six-week to 2,484.24.

Leading the global market's selloff were financial stocks, which have been dumped on growing concerns of collateralized debt obligation (CDO).

Viray noted that more than $1.00 billion worth of repurchase cash CDOs, which are backed by subprime loans as collateral, were issued in the US in the fourth quarter of last year alone.

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Risk premium on RP 5-year bonds rising

Investors spooked by US subprime market

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE INVESTOR SCARE OVER THE US SUBprime market has taken its toll on Philippine bonds, according to the Department of Finance.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, who also serves as acting national treasurer, said that because of the environment over the US subprime credit market, the Philippine five-year bonds now fetch a premium of 150 basis points, compared to below 200 bps in the first half of the year.

This means that investors see Philippine bonds as more risky than they want a higher return on their placements.

"There is loss of confidence on emerging market credit, which has the same credit ratings as the US subprime market," Tan said in a briefing last Friday.

The US subprime market is composed of high risk borrowers of housing loans, and recent defaults have caused concern that banks and fund management firms with a large exposure in this market could be in for a hard time.

Finance officials said it was fortunate that the Philippine government had already completed its foreign, commercial borrowing requirement for 2007 early this year, and so it does not need to tap the international commercial market for funding.

In January, the government sold $1 billion worth of global bonds, completing its commercial, foreign borrowing program for the year in one breadwinner.

This is on top of the $1.466 billion worth of official development assistance programmed to be borrowed for the year.

The foreign currency-denominated loans are intended largely to pay off maturing liabilities in foreign creditors.

Tan admitted there was no demand at the moment for sovereign issues by emerging markets, including the Philippines, especially after some mortgage financing firms in the United States were reported to be facing financial difficulties due to defaults by clients.

The finance official said, however, that compared with other emerging markets, the Philippines was still better off.

He explained that the risk premium of bonds issued by competing countries has been much higher compared to the Philippines.

"Investors are somehow discounting the fundamental strength of the Philippines," Tan said.

IFC agrees to restructure $14.5-M Mariwasa loan

By Konrad W. Bonoan

THE WORLD BANK'S INVESTMENT ARM said it had agreed to restructure its $14.5-million investment in the country's largest ceramic tile maker.

The International Finance Corp. said in a statement that it had led a group of lenders in negotiations with owners of Mariwasa Manufacturing to agree on a debt restructuring deal.

IFC said the deal signed recently called for a new shareholder and management structure as well as more focused marketing strategy.

The statement quoted Satoshi Kinoshita, president of subsidiary firm Mariwasa Siam Ceramics (MSC), as pledging to focus more energy on improving the company's profitability and financial stability by growing the business in the domestic market as well as overseas.

The revised marketing strategy prompts Mariwasa to capture markets like Guam, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, South Africa and Thailand.

IFC first invested in Mariwasa in 2000 but the company defaulted in 2003 amid increased competition, slowing demand, spiraling electricity costs and loss of market share to imported ceramic tiles.

Jesse Ang, IFC acting country manager, welcomed the restructuring deal.

"With IFC's renewed support, we hope to enhance Mariwasa's efficiency and its ability to find niche markets," he added.

STI to put up new center

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

STI, ONE OF THE LARGEST EDUcational institutions in the Philippines, plans to put up a modern academic center in Bonifacio Global City Taguig.

The new school building is estimated to cost P250 million.

STI president Marissa V. Jacob said in a statement that a lease contract was recently executed in STI by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) for its Gateway project.

"STI is now geared up for the actual construction of the building due to be completed in 2008," Jacob said.

Jacob said that the eight-story complex will house a research and development center and state of the art gymnasium.

It is part of STI's P2.5 billion expansion program, which includes the recent establishment of the TRAM STI Megaville in Muntinlupa, its residences in Doña Soledad STI Medical center and the expansion of STI campuses through acquisition of properties in Antipolo.

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Apple's iMac gets a major makeover

Text and photos by Charles E. Rubio

APPLE INC. HAS ALWAYS been known for thinking out avant garde, minimalistic, clean and visually impressive products.

Last week was no different as the company unveiled the 4th iteration of its all-in-one iMac, which for those not yet familiar, is Apple's line of desktop computers.

Just like the previous generations, the new iMac has everything behind the LCD panel, only the slim. Apple was able to get everything and more into a much slimmer—barely 4-cm thick at the edge—anodized aluminum and glass enclosure.

The new iMac comes in two sizes: 20- and 24-inch widescreen models.

"Although the new iMacs are packed with more powerful specs and carries the latest applications, they are actually priced lower than their previous model counterparts. For example, the 20-inch model starts at just P67,390, which is P29,700 less than the previous 20-inch. The 24-inch, on the other hand, starts at P102,090 and a P23,700 less than the previous 24-inch," explained Jaeun Adams Crane after a five-minute display at the new iMac now sports a glossy one, which is borrowed in black and is now covered by a scratch resistant glass.

Performance-wise the new iMac should be faster than the last one since it is now powered by a faster dual-core Intel processor with speeds ranging from 2 GHz to 2.4 GHz (using Intel Core 2 Duo) and up to 2.8 GHz (using Intel Core 2 Extreme).

The new iMac is also equipped with ATI Technologies' next generation of graphics (either the entry-level Radeon HD 2400 XT with 128MB of graphics double data rate 3 memory or the high-end Radeon HD 2600 PRO with 256MB of GDDR3 memory) as well as the option to load up internal storage up to 1 tera-shirts to accommodate a user's growing library of digital photos, movies and music.

Located at the back panel's lower left are several connectivity options, which include gigabit ethernet, AirWave Extreme 802.11n wireless networking (now five times more powerful and twice the range than what is previously offered), integrated Bluetooth 2.0 (certified if this is available including the two bundled on the keyboard), and an internal modem for use with the included remote control.

Notable redesign

Another notable redesign in the new iMacs is its ultra-thin anodized aluminum keyboard.

Now thin? It now offers a key height of just 0.63 cm (versus 2.16 cm of the previous version). The keyboard includes special function keys for easy touch control of Mac features, and two USB 2.0 ports for connecting with the iSight, Mighty Mouse, digital camera and other devices.

Apple also used the introduction of the new iMac as an occasion to introduce iLife '08, iWork '08 and enhancements to its iMac online service.

The iLife '08 (retail at P5,090) is the latest version of the company's digital lifestyle applications suite, which is comprised of the iPhoto digital image management program, iMovie (for editing digital video), iWeb (for building Web pages), iDVD (for creating DVDs) and GarageBand (for recording music).

"Major changes to the iPhoto include a new Events feature that organizes tons of photos by folding photos with similar event within easy representative photo; a 'Montage' feature is also introduced, which lets users see the different photos hidden within those representative photos," explained Melvyn Chen, Apple's product marketing manager for Asia Pacific.

The digital video editor iMovie was also upgraded to support the advanced video codec high definition format. The iMovie also adopted the "filmstrip" feature found in iPhoto so that users would also skim through videos without having to play clips to see what they contain.

Also installed in the new iMac is Apple's proprietary suite called iWork '08 (P4,790). It includes three new applications: Pages '08, the streamlined word processor for the Mac, Keynote '08 that easily creates stunning, cinematic-quality presentations, and the latest addition, Numbers '08 a familiar (because of its look and you-get-the-Microsoft-Excel) yet revolutionary new spreadsheet application.

"Even with these upgrades and new features, system requirements are pretty up to users of older Macs. You'll just need an Intel, PowerPC G5 or G4 machine with a 500MHz or better processor in addition to 512MB of RAM minimum, running OS X 10.4.10 to enjoy these bundled up applications," promised Ong.

Microsoft brings Windows Mobile 6 to RP

By Kaa T. Dizhonoka

MICROSOFT PHILIPPINES LOCALLY RELEASED Windows Mobile 6, an improved suite of Microsoft's Office applications for mobile devices built on mixed platforms.

The company said that the new version of its mobile software platform, launched in India last month, offers better functionality and added support for Microsoft Office programs such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Outlook email, which used to be available only on PCs but are now becoming standard for smartphones.

The platform allows users to navigate and edit Word documents and Excel spreadsheets in their original format, without altering tables, images or text.

The enhanced user interface of Windows Mobile 6 lets users view PowerPoint presentations, as well as e-mail in their original HTML format, complete with font links. There is also access to Microsoft products such as SharePoint sites and Exchange Server 2007.

Windows Mobile 6 also includes Windows Live for Windows Mobile, which provides consumer with a rich set of Windows Live services—churning with more than one person at one time, using animated avatars, quickly sending a file or image, or recording and sending voice notes.

All Windows Mobile 6-powered devices include 16-text Push Technology for up-to-the-minute e-mail delivery and automatic synchronization of Outlook calendars, tasks and contacts through Microsoft Exchange Server.

It also offers device security and management features, including the capability to remotely wipe all data from a device in case it is lost or stolen.

"In a fast-paced, digital world, having access to information and digital content right at our fingertips is essential for business success. Windows Mobile 6 is providing users with innovative mobile technologies that offer mobility and connectivity to make life simpler, more convenient and more productive," said Microsoft Philippines senior product manager Jojo Apuan.

"Microsoft mission is for to research and development to be able to come up with great software that will make people become more productive in their work," said Apuan.

Other improved features include the smart calendar bar, new one-click options in e-mail management, synchronization with Windows Vista and powerful search and filtering options are built to maximize business productivity.

It offers free built-in Bluetooth .NET Compact Framework and Microsoft SQL Server and Bluetooth wireless or cable connection, which makes it easier for the user to create, access and reach information and sales and inventory tools while away from their desks.

Windows Mobile 6 is already built into new models of Taiwanese firm HTC, which recently bought smartphone maker Dopod.

Existing users of HTC's i3600w, i3610, P6500 and i3500 can also upgrade from the Windows Mobile 5 operating system to Windows Mobile 6 by downloading a code from the company's Web site.

Other partners of Microsoft Philippines such as HP Palm and Samsung are expected to launch models with Windows Mobile 6 as well.

Text messaging goes a notch higher

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POPULARITY OF SOCIal networking sites and user-generated content has transcended the Internet and has crossed over to the mobile world.

Chikka Asia's new instant messaging service, Chikka 2.0, capitalizes on the new wave of Web technologies and applications that are the Internet as platform, said chief operating officer Quin Quintanadoc.

"Our own homegrown is inspired by this Internet Renaissance," but a more significantly infused with the level of mobile services we have been enabling for the last six years, for some of the world's most demanding mobile markets," he said.

Chikka 2.0, which features the fourth version of the Chikka Messenger, not only allows users to send text messages from the PC to the mobile phone, but also operates with popular instant messaging clients Google Talk, Yahoo Messenger, MSN, AIM and ICQ.

This means users can control their contacts from other instant messaging interfaces with their Chikka contacts, both on the PC and mobile phone.

The new Chikka service also allows the delivery of various mobile content and mobile call credits from the Web to the mobile device, a feature that the company expects will quickly catch the fancy of Filipinos and other Chikka users around the globe.

With this new feature, Chikka users can now personal profiles, upload photos and videos, and blog within their Chikka Messenger.

"Chikka 2.0 now addresses mobile consumers with fast and reliable connectivity for their services but includes the option of mobile call credits, the delivery of mobile content such as icons and images, and of course, short messaging service," Quintanadoc said.

"Our architected mobile capabilities are expected to make popular online communities even more vibrant. We envision Internet and mobile communities uniting like never before," he added.

Chikka's wireless applications are deployed through the networks of more than 60 mobile carriers in the Philippines, United States, United Kingdom, Spain, India, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong. It has a community of more than 18 million users.

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-G1: Multimedia convergence

By Martina Bagnores

CONSIDER THIS: A 3.5-INCH LCD screen, 2GB of internal storage, a 9MP-enhanced user interface, and Wi-Fi connectivity. Now tell me you can find these features in your ordinary digicam. But are these what you really need?

Big features in a big package

With a 3.5-inch LCD screen, the G1's built is noticeable compared with that of other digicams consuming everything into a tiny piece of face-facial plastic. In fact, the rear of the camera frames the screen about, with less you open the slide mechanism that reveals the camera controls. Yes, it has a slide mechanism just like a mobile phone.

The camera's internal storage is exactly what we'll want in every model, more than enough storage for a day of slick happy shooting since it the full 6-megapixel resolution, with space to spare for older albums and music.

The high-end model features Carl Zeiss lens. Image optimization of maintaining image quality at full resolution. Also available is its combination DIS-boost/image stabilization technology called Super SteadyShot, to let you capture sharp images in non-ideal lighting conditions.

Ours to please

The large LCD display allows you to compose and review your photos with ease, to find too-easily that you begin to wonder if everyone around you is looking at your screen without much effort. The user interface mimics that of the PSP which makes playing with the menus and settings very entertaining.

The screen is put to good use with the camera's engaging playback features. Capable of grouping photos into albums and date format, you get view options typically available in your desktop software. Many impressively, slideshows with the G1 is a definite crowd pleaser with presentation-type transitions and background music to tune.

Sony's InfoLithium battery is also used in this model, capable of displaying the remaining life of a battery before it runs out. Disappointingly despite the large screen and fancy interface, the unit has over three hours of battery life.

In find out how the Sony G1 fared, grabs copy of Mobile Philippines July-August issue. It has the just 100 pieces from newsstands.

PROJECTORS ARE IN AGAIN

AS THE rest of everything nowadays in theater format continues to rise, more and more people start looking for alternatives that are more affordable but are equally as capable to deliver the quality.

Acer attempts to address this need with its PD 113 projector, which allows movie viewing in the comfort of one's home.

Powered by Acer's Digital Light Processing (DLP) technology, the Acer PD 113 boasts of a 1,024 x 768 resolution (native XGA) and the very powerful 1280:1 (typical) contrast ratio (max 2000:1 ratio in the brighter mode), plus 2,000:1 native. As the brighter mode, PD 113 is a winner as it takes pride of a 2,000-hour lamp life for standard viewing, or your longer when viewing using economy features.

Gov't corporations remit ₱6.3B in dividends

Full-year target of ₱3.17B exceeded in first 7 months

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT COLLECTED ₱6.3 billion in dividends from non-financial government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs).

Among the GOCCs, the Philippine State Authority named as the largest remitter at ₱1.4 billion, followed by Philippine National Oil Co. with ₱1.2 billion.

Governmental financial institutions or GFIs accounted for the balance, with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas contributing ₱2.5 billion.

The seven-month dividend collection surpassed the DOF goal of ₱4 billion for the entire year.

On top of the dividends, the DOF said the government had also collected fines reported, the government likewise collected ₱6.7 billion in guarantee fees from GOCCs and LGUs, and ₱97 million in interest.

Guarantee fees are charged on GOCCs that incur loans covered by sovereign guarantees. The national government charges interests on loans that it extends to these firms.

Finance Undersecretary Jeremias Small Jr. told reporters that GOCCs and GFIs were directed to strictly observe the requirement of remitting part of their income to state coffers. Most of these firms are required by their charters to remit at least 50 percent of their net income to the national government.

Small said that in the past, many GOCCs had failed to remit dividends to the national government but the DOF recently tightened its watch over these firms.

"We talked to some GOCCs and told them they should fulfill their dependence on the national government. It's time for them to help the government," Small said.

Some GOCCs have been tapping heavily on subsidies from the national government for their operations, one reason for its budget woes over the past years. The DOF said fixing the national government's fiscal house is under way and financial discipline among GOCCs.

The dividends, guarantee fees and interest collected from state-owned firms formed part of the recorded income of the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr).

Asean ministers to boost efforts for integration

By Norma W. Dorotan

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF Southeast Asian Nations are expected to widen the scope of the region's integration when economic ministers meet in Makati City next week.

This developed as the Asean started implementing the blueprint for a single market and production base.

Trade Assistant Secretary Ramon Vicente T. Rabaglrig told reporters the 10-member bloc was poised to add a twelfth sector where economic integration would be a priority.

"Logistics services have been identified as a new priority sector," Rabaglrig said.

"The inclusion of the logistics sector is good for the Philippines considering that our domestic industry is good and could be better," Rabaglrig said.

In a declaration issued in 2003 during a summit held in Bali, Indonesia—called Bali Concord II—Asean leaders agreed to establish the Asean Economic Community (AEC) through integration starting with 11 priority sectors.

These were subsequently identified as the industries related to the manufacture and processing of the electronics, automotive, garments and textiles, wood-based, agricultural, fisheries and rubber.

Also identified were five service sectors, involving information and communication technology dubbed e-Asean air travel, tourism and healthcare.

The Bali Concord II also set the target of achieving the AEC in 2020, which was advanced to 2015 through an agreement forged in the 12th Asean Summit held in Cebu last January.

Rabaglrig explained that the 39th Asean Economic Ministers Meeting to be held on Aug. 29 at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, was regarded as pivotal for integration efforts.

"This is a changeover meeting because it would signal the change from the period when the blueprint for integration was drafted to the first year when this blueprint would be implemented," he explained.

He added that the 39th AEM would basically check whether the draft of the Asean Charter—which was a highlight of the Asean Ministerial Meeting held last month—covered the economic aspirations of the group.

DENR inks deal on ₱116-M Camiguin project

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources signed last week a memorandum of agreement to implement the ₱116-million Camiguin Coastal Resource Project.

The project is aimed at pushing for more sustainable environmental practices in the province, covering five towns—Mambajao, Mahinog, Catarman, Sagay and Catarman.

Located in the northern tip of Mindanao, the pear-shaped island of Camiguin has several falls and springs, seven volcanoes and other ecotourism attractions.

The New Zealand Agency for International Development has provided a grant of ₱67.71 million for the coastal resource project, while the national government contributed ₱39.8 million as counterpart fund.

New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines David Pine said he is confident that the project would increase natural productivity in the areas while improving the quality of life of Camiguin folks.

"We are optimistic that after five years, an integrated coastal resources management would have been successfully implemented at the barangay, municipal and provincial levels," Pine said.

BUSINESS

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DOE pushing for faster energy sector privatization

By Abigail L. Ho

FOLLOWING THE SALE OF THE 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant last month, the Department of Energy seeks to accelerate the government's energy sector privatization plans.

"It is now the right time to review the privatization calendar ahead of us, not necessarily to affect them, but certainly to accelerate them," Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said in a speech before power industry stakeholders last Friday.

He said that while the planning for new generation capacity should take place now, this should not be a priority until the privatization exercise, particularly that of National Power Corp.'s assets, were completed.

"What is more important is to put in place a fair and level playing field for new investors to ensure long-term sustainability of supply. True energy security lies to a vibrant and competitive market," he said.

One way to introduce competition to the power sector, he said, was through the full operation of the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM).

Although riddled with hitch pains, he said the Wesm, on its first year of operation in Luzon, was able to introduce "transparency and symmetry of information" in the power sector.

"Six-to-five years ago, it appears to me that the WESM has had no interesting time. The results of the first year of operations will continue to be studied by many observers, investors and other jurisdictions for the lessons that we have learned," he said.

"Despite this, the most important overall objective has been achieved—that of establishing transparency and symmetry of information. This is fundamental to any industry. Without it, there can be no competition," he added.

Only on its third month in operation last June, the market surveillance committee of WESM operator Philippine Electricity Market Corp. found indications that the trading teams of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. were manipulating prices at the electricity bourse.

After some months of investigation, PEMC found PSALM guilty of anti-competitive behavior and market power abuse.

To prevent something like this from happening again, PEMC has committed to beef up its surveillance and monitoring activities.

PEMC president Lance Hidalgonzo said one of his company's priorities was the establishment of a system and procedure for the detection, at close to real time, of "abnormal market outcomes."

The new system, he said, would enable PEMC to determine specific anticompetitive behaviors or exercise of market power.

PEMC also aimed at improving its surveillance tools and monitoring to ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the market, he said.

MALAYSIA INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS COMPETITION 2007
18 August - 2 September 2007

National teams from around the globe will dazzling your senses as the spectacular night displays every time staged in the country for the two weeks starting from 18 August 2007 leading up to Malaysia's 50th Merdeka. Be dazzled by awe-inspiring night-time aerobatics more than still definitely assure the senses of all who witness it.

These magical fireworks performances lasting for at least 30 minutes on each competitive night, are developed by renowned fireworks manufacturers, each representing a different country, after months and months of painstaking effort and work.

The fireworks are made on a standing point by the creative of the displays and also the choice of music determines the rhythm and the meaning that the artists wishes to give to the presentation. Here, the overall song considers of selecting the personalities's something to their individual and technical characteristics.

After each competitor's show, a jury will head presentation awards for performance and the winners team will receive a prestigious award before the grand finale on 2 September 2007.

The event also features the "vibrant pyrotechnic" an illuminated presentation of fantastic laser beam as well as the "Golden Jubilee Night Show" featuring the "Aquatic Theatre" and an "Animated Light Show" that retells the historical story of Malaysia.

Spectators can relax, dine and enjoy spectacular view of the fireworks from a prime location on the esplanade front of the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) where food stalls and souvenirs will be served as a complete festival shopping Night Village.

To keep your soon in the air this August as a sequence of pyrotechnic display will lit up the skies in Putrajaya and guests' eyes sights being treated to a festival of lights, colors and talents.

Programmes:
19 August - Team Australia (opening ceremony)
22 August - Team China
23 August - Team Malaysia
24 August - Team Italy
25 August - Team India
26 August - Team Japan
31 August - Team Poland
1 September - Team United
2 September - Grand Finale Awards Ceremony & Grand Finale

Event information:
Dates: 18 August - 2 September 2007
Venue: • Putrajaya International Convention Centre
• Dataran Putrajaya, Putrajaya
Time: • Malaysia Time, Malaysia
• Universal Time (GMT)
Firework / Pyrotechnic: • Grand Finale Site Shell
• Floating Site #1
• Floating Site #2
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About Visit Malaysia Year 2007
BOP, in conjunction with Malaysia's 50th year of independence, Visit Malaysia Year is aims to the catalyst to spur the Malaysian tourism industry to achieve the targets set in the 9th Malaysia Plan. 2007s target visitor and over 400 complementary events have been planned nationwide. In 2007, Visit Malaysia Year is expected to attract 20.1 million visitors worldwide and spawn RM44.1 billion in foreign exchange contribution.
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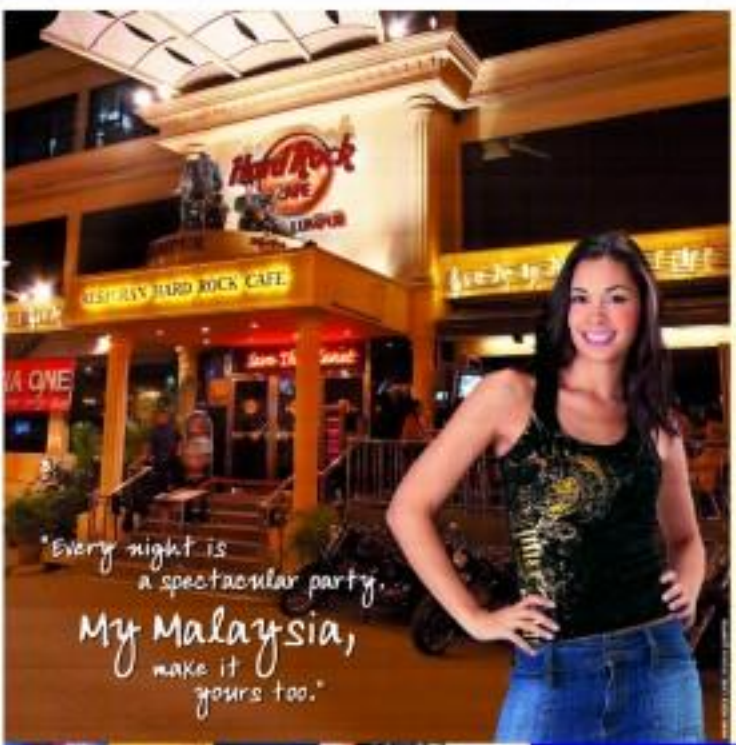

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MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Kapitan

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Farmers cope with rains, drought

₱3 M bangus fry, ₱2 M palay lost due to bad weather

Text by Denise Cunha and Edriel Cambosa
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET— The rains have arrived and the drought may be over.

But because a dry spell and a prolonged wet season, the province's vegetable farmers would be concerned more about rains.

The last is the dry spell in the last two months did not down vegetable production and supply.

The drought may have caused the lowlands' rice lands to crack but Benguet's vegetable farms continued to be moist and damp.

Julio Ortegaleg, a farmer from Barangay Balakbak in Baguio town, said in his more than 40 years of farming, dry spells were rare.

"But continuous rains and typhoons directly destroy crops. They would sweep newly planted seeds and ruin vegetables ready for harvest to rot," he said.

Ortegaleg and the other farmers have reasons to thank tropical storms "Chedeng" and "Dodong" and typhoon "Egay." They abruptly ended the drawn-out drought, and brought moderate amounts of rains and winds that hardly caused damage to the vegetable farms.

Ledlechenyo, provincial agriculturist, said the crop damage was negligible, with only Tuba, Itogon, Sablan and Mankayan towns reporting damages.

Baguio, Itogon and Kabayan and Kibungan, considered the

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RP can learn from Vietnam

By Willy E. Avella
Contributor

OUR COUNTRY CAN LEARN A great deal from Vietnam, particularly in how our neighboring Asian state successfully switched its moribund economy starting in 1986.

Since then, Vietnam powered ahead with an average annual growth of 8 percent to earn the accolades of the global business community.

At the same time, it relieved poverty by incidence at home, thus achieving the exceedingly elusive goal of sustainable economic growth and equitable income distribution.

'Doi Moi'

Faced with stagnant growth, a severe food shortage, fiscal deficits, soaring inflation and drastic trade imbalances, the Ninth National Congress of Vietnam's Communist Party held in December 1986, initiated sweeping economic reorientation policy.

Popularly known as "Doi Moi", the policy was aimed at making the country self-sufficient in food production and supporting the standard of living of the people.

The core of "Doi Moi" was to reduce state intervention in business and open the economy to foreign investments.

The government removed subsidies to drive efficiency and liberalized prices. A Foreign Investment Code was adopted, and the banking system reformed.

In the agricultural sector, land reform gave usage rights, tenure and greater autonomy to farmers.

Trade was liberalized in 1990, allowing more public and private firms to participate in external trade as exports and import materials were expanded beyond the former Soviet Union and Eastern European nations, Vietnam's traditional trading partners.

As a result of these reforms, exports have grown at a robust and consistent average rate of over 20 percent annually.

For the first half of 2007, Vietnam's exports have further accelerated to 22 percent against the Philippines' 6.5 percent, which has slowed considerably partly due to the appreciating of the peso.

It is noteworthy that despite Vietnam's export surge, and improvements in its balance of trade and balance of payments, the Vietnam currency dong continues to depreciate which manifests the government's support for exporters.

Foreign investments

Since "Doi Moi," Vietnam's foreign direct investments (FDI) have reached an accumulated invested capital of $80 billion, according to Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who spoke at a Business Forum in the Manila Hotel during his first state visit here.

In 2006 alone, FDI reached $10 billion compared to our $2 billion. This year, Vietnam projects to attract as much as $15 billion compared to our target of $3.5 billion.

From January to May, the Philippines' FDI hit only $900 million, 60 percent below 2006's.

Vietnam's projected FDI for 2007 represents nearly 50 percent of the FDI reported in China, even as China's population is 16 times that of Vietnam's, which is a strong indicator of the perceived dim foreign investors see and their confidence in Asia's next tiger economy.

This "gold rush" of investments into Vietnam can be attributed to several factors.

In meetings and interviews with foreign businessmen doing business in Ho Chi Minh, University of Asia and the Pacific economist and an organizer for the First Philippine Venture Mission scheduled in Ho Chi Minh City in mid-August, Florence Mojica Jovilla, observed that foreign investors praised the Vietnam government for ensuring a climate conducive for investments.

It is a vibrant characterized by political stability, peace and order, an openness to market-oriented reforms, generous fiscal incentives, low corporate tax rates, a competitive cost structure, and a young, well-educated, productive, and highly skilled workforce.

An observer commented, "One of the most apparent differences between the Philippines and Vietnam is that in our country, there continues to be an obsession in politics, exhibition and entertainment, while in Vietnam, everyone simply works hard and fast."

Income distribution

Vietnam's GINI Coefficient, (an economist's measure of income inequality where a value of 1 means only 1 person owns 100 percent of a country's income) is only at 0.40, an admirable feat considering that the country has been independent for only 30 years since declaring the United States to the Vietnam War.

In contrast, the Philippines, which claims to be one of Asia's oldest independent and democratic republics, hovers nearer to 0.50, even higher than some African nations.

At the Maiden Business Forum, Vietnam's Vice Minister of Trade and Industry Nguyen Tan Dung added that as part of "Doi Moi," the government had adopted a pro-poor policy by prioritizing an food production and support for farmers via land reforms, savings, financing, and farm-to-market infrastructure linkages.

Professor Hidenobi Dy formerly with the World Bank and now the Dean of Agribusiness in the University of Asia and the Pacific, confirmed that Vietnam has already achieved self-sufficiency in food production.

Today Vietnam is poised to overtake Thailand as the world's largest exporter of rice.

It also exports a wide variety of agricultural and marine products such as coffee, green tea, fresh pepper, rubber, cashew nuts, cashew, seafood and tiger prawns.

Vietnam's per capita income of $700 is expected to reach $1,200 by 2010, representing a compounded annual growth rate of plus 13 percent, whereas the per capita GDP of the Philippines remained virtually unchanged for the past 50 years at around $1,200.

It is admirable for Vietnam to project raising per capita GDP even as it increases its population base to 140 million people while same Philippine government planners seem to blame our country's population for poverty, instead of harnessing their productivity.

Outsourced by China

Many countries including the Philippines appear to have given up on competing with China, the super factory of the world, but Vietnam remained undaunted.

Today its food processing industry has not only achieved global standards, but has succeed to successfully compete with China's.

This is true as well in durable consumer goods like footwear and garments.

And now that the US and other markets have been penetrated by exports of sophisticated Chinese products ranging from canned food and candy, seafood and pet food, toys and children's clothes, tires and bicycles, Vietnam's exporters will stand to benefit in its attempt to woo, while China remedies its quality control issues.

In the field of high-value electronics, hard to ever only building its $4-billion factory in Vietnam but also to woo others to train and recruit Vietnamese to supply its crafting needs.

Business mission

But the Philippines can take advantage of Vietnam's growth.

It is for this reason that a Philippine-Vietnam Business Mission will be held in Ho Chi Minh City from Aug. 29 to Sept. 1, 2007.

It is being initiated jointly by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Department of Trade and Industry, DMG Signature Brand Showell Inc, and the University of Asia and the Pacific in conjunction with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Vietnam Trade Office in the Philippines.

Gigi Tubero, managing director of DMG Signature Brand Showell Inc., explained that the objectives of the mission are primarily to: (1) explore opportunities for Philippine companies to set up trade relationships directly with Vietnamese partners; (2) explore import as well as direct and financial investments between the two home states; (3) obtain a better understanding of the success of Vietnam's "Doi Moi" that was started in 1986 for possible adaptation in the Philippines; and (3) enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.

Clearly, businesses have no doubt that Vietnam is well positioned to become Asia's next tiger economy, and it is this imperative for the Philippines to learn from and participate in Vietnam's success story.

[The author is partner and regional director of leading human capital solutions provider DMG Signature Brand Showell Inc.]

TOURIST boats sail toward the stone islands of Halong Bay. Vietnam is enjoying a surge in tourist arrivals.

BUSINESS is more brisk than usual in Vietnam.

PRESIDENT Arroyo welcomes Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

IN SAGAY, Mt. Province, carabaos flatten the earth before farmers plant rice.

MAYS in August allowed farmers to harvest early. A young Ibaloi marches over the harvest at the La Trinidad Trading Post.

CARABAOS, man and machine work tirelessly to start the planting season.

Farmers cope with rains ...

(From page B1)

heavyweights in vegetable production, have yet to submit damage reports, farmers said.

Gov. Nestor Fongwan said the drought and this month's continuous rains did not affect vegetable supply at all.

Instead, some farmers complained their crops were damaged.

"The vegetables are there," said Fongwan.

In Pangasinan, at least P3 million worth of bangus fingerlings swam into the open sea after several fishponds in Binmaley were overflowed due to the continuous rains.

Dalmay Moya, officer in charge of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, said at least 115 hectares of fishponds in seven Binmaley barangays lost some 381,000 of bangus fingerlings.

Binmaley is one of the province's major producers of the famed Pangasinan bangus.

Moya said the rains also destroyed at least P2.22 million worth of rice crops in the towns of Calasiao and Mabini and in Alaminos City.

In Calasiao, 2,329 hectares of rice fields have been damaged by the rains, while 1,777 hectares of demonstration farms planted with hybrid rice have been destroyed in Mabini.

In Alaminos City, 7,013 hectares of rice plants in their vegetative stage have been damaged.

A MAN takes his cow to safer ground as floodwaters rise in Brgy. Dalongan, Sta Barbara, Pangasinan.

CHILDREN help plant rice seedlings in Candon City, Ilocos Sur.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. A farmer uses his "kuliglig" (lawn mower) cut his rain-ill plant paddy in Brgy. Vendiola in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

UK experience in risk management, corporate governance

I HAVE PROMISED THIS PIECE IN response to the article in Forbes Asia, May 25, 2006 issue about the World Bank 2006 Country Assessment ranking the Philippines 11th out of 12 countries in terms of observing corporate governance principles and practices.

It is my hope also that the article will help encourage proper compliance with SEC Memorandum Circular No. 2, Series of 2002 dated Aug. 9, 2002, which requires publicly listed companies to put in place in a corporate governance survey.

At the recent introduction of 2006 MAP president Evelyn Singson, I was appointed as the Philippine representative to the September 2006 UK Study Mission on Risk Management and Corporate Governance organized by the Asian Productivity Organization based in Tokyo, Japan, which was participated in by representatives from various Asian countries.

I wish to say that the UK listed companies and their internal governance program spoke highly about the practice of good corporate governance as well as the importance of risk management as a function integral to corporate governance.

To them, sound business principles and effective corporate governance are foundations for business success.

The same statement applies regardless of company size, whether such company is privately owned or publicly listed, or whether such company is in a developing or developed country.

From the materials distributed, like The Black Sun survey, the Hermes and CBC Corporate Governance Principles, Alenic Risk Management Principles, etc., I would like to present the key UK and ISSM principles in UK in the following areas which can be considered in the Philippine setting:

- Creating a working board
- Enhancing annual report disclosures
- Stewarding and implementing performance evaluation process
- Keeping pace with Enterprise Risk Management
- Highlighting the role of the finance function in corporate governance

MAPping the Future

Cebuo P. Dayao

Strategic boards

Ideally subscribe to the general statement in UK that an independent, diverse, working and strategic board is paramount in improving board effectiveness and effectiveness.

Stems the materials received from theft, GSK, CBC, Siemens and British American Tobacco, the following UK practices are worth considering:

1. At least one-third of directors comprising the board are independent.

2. A senior independent director who is supposed to be the financial expert of the board is appointed. He updates the board on current developments in accounting and financial reporting.

3. New directors are given formal induction upon joining the Board.

4. Individual directors are required to attend at least 24 hours of training a year.

Annual reports

In December 2005, the UK Government abolished the mandatory Operating Financial Review (OFR) for listed companies and instead limited annual-aged UK companies to narrative their annual report disclosures after the Business Review (BR) requirements as embodied in the EU Accounts Modernization Directive.

The primary purpose of the BR is to communicate to investors how much value a listed company has created during the year and why the company believes that it is well placed to continue to create value.

The contents of the BR were much geared as those to OFR but in a less prescriptive form. Basically, the BR requires reporting companies to cover the following:

- Nonfinancial issues relevant to business development and performance such as those relating to environmental matters and human capital management.
- Principal risks, uncertainties.
- Balanced and comprehensive business analysis.

However, the Black Sun August 2006 research report disclosed that 25% of the analyzed FTSE 100 companies having March 2006 year-ends, are still adjusting to the BR requirements.

One thing is sure though based on the survey, i.e., there is an emerging new reporting regime putting greater emphasis on credibility, completeness and improved communication, markedly as to structure, style and contents...all means to share greater transparency in order to preserve or boost company's reputation.

The following are some notable narrative disclosures:

1. Biographies of independent directors showing their academic background, related experiences, number of board seats currently being held as officer companies and hours of training completed during the year.

2. Specific notice dedicated to corporate governance matters, which section could run to five pages in the annual report.

3. Details about external advisers as to their background, nature of connection, etc.

4. Details of remuneration of each director, comprising of share option schemes, salaries, bonuses, benefits, or even loss in remuneration directors.

5. A subsection in the Governance Report, which details the management of business risks, the ISM structure and ISM process as well as the principal risks facing the business.

In brief, many UK companies have already realized the "competitive edge" effect in the market place of embracing best practices reporting.

To those companies, best practice reporting is more of an opportunity than an obligation.

Evaluation processes

Performance evaluations are not confined to company self-assessments.

There are other formal Performance Evaluation frameworks such as Board Effectiveness Assessment, Directors' Self-Peer Assessment and Board evaluation of CEOs.

More of the speakers also shared their practices and relevant ISM materials, which mostly related to the management of specialized risks.

Given their varied disciplines, they share a common observation that ISM is a rapidly developing discipline with many varied views on what risk management entails.

However, one big question not answered during the visit was: How should risk management be integrated in the company's business strategy and process? How can the current fragmented, functionally driven and adhoc ISM approaches be converted or integrated into one holistic, process driven, value based approach like ERM?

The best material we received, and closest to ERM is a booklet on Risk Management from Alenic based in Serbia.

The booklet contains many ingredients of ERM.

In brief and as depicted in The Black Sun survey there is no doubt that majority of companies are discussing risks, but with little breath and depth.

And only half provide description of future and unforeseen risks as prescribed by the Accounting Standard Board.

The survey concluded that it is in this ISM area where there is a vast potential for improvement in reporting, meaning that while 90 percent of surveyed companies are discussing risks in the annual report, the appropriate text is necessary some.

Only 11 percent disclosed material risks and over half devoted only one page to ISM reporting (unfortunately, nothing was mentioned about ISM reporting in the survey).

Finance function

As the saying goes, accounting is the language of business and financial reporting is the backbone of communication.

Annual reports which are used as basis to measure business performance are audited by audited financial statements.

The areas of accounting and financial reporting, as well as auditing, are the domain of professional accountants.

Without objective and reliable financial statements coupled with necessary narrative disclosures, decision-makers cannot make well-informed decisions.

The finance function therefore, is an indispensable part of a corporate governance system.

It has become a good business practice to have the board of directors approve the appointment and removal, remuneration and terms of employment of chief finance officers, and heads of internal audit.

The CFO of a listed company must be a member of a recognized body of professional accountants, or a graduate from a recognized university or equivalent, having at least five years experience in handling financial or corporate affairs of listed public companies, banks, or financial institutions.

Governance code

A sample UK code of corporate governance furnished to us also included a separate section called "Accountability on Financial Reporting," which states that the board should present a balanced and understandable assessment of the company's performance, financial position and business prospects in their company's interim reports, other price sensitive public reports and reports to regulators.

In turn, the code also requires management to provide all directors with management prepared reports on a monthly basis and which report should also present a balanced and understandable assessment of the company's operating performance, financial position and business prospects.

In conclusion, I would like to say that embracing corporate governance and risk management principles and practices is like saying: There must be continuing commitment to uphold such principles and practices. What drives the value of an organization is the willingness of the board, the individual directors and senior management to assume the lead role in steering the company to the proper observance of the SEC Principles of corporate governance and effective implementation of the ISM systems and strategies.

(The author is a member of the MAP committee on corporate governance and chair of the MAP best annual report awards committee. He is the vice chair and CEO of the Corporate Governance Institute of the Philippines. Feedback at mapaer@globelines.com.ph.)

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GE imagination at work

Globe links Filipino entrepreneurs to micro financing institutions via SMS

Globe brings a new service to the Filipino entrepreneurs to help them as they take the first step in turning their envisioned start-up businesses into reality. Globe has launched the Micro Asenso! Text Facility that will lend small businesses to be micro financing institutions (MFI) nearest to them.

The service is one of the unique offerings Globe has developed with the government in support of the many micro businesses and small and medium enterprises (SME) from all over the country. In the official relevant provider of BSFIC for the Micro Asenso! Text Facility, Globe has partnered with Microfinance Program Committee (MFPC), a group of government financing institutions (GFIs) formed to promote financing assistance services in the country.

Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo launched the new service last July by sending an SMS (short messaging service) to 2073 and located the MFI in her hometown, Lubao, Pampanga.

President Arroyo was assisted by Presidential Management Staff Chief and Malacañang's Oversight Officer for Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Sec. Cerge Remonde and BSFIC Chair Edgar Generoso. Globe President and CEO Gerry Ablaza and Innove Communications CEO Gil Genio were also present as this big event, which was attended by various MFIs.

The Micro Asenso! Text Facility powered by Globe helps address the Filipino entrepreneur's most common concerns, one of which is how to get funding assistance to build his dream business and where to look for it.

Globe provides the answer as it makes communications technology work for the benefit of the micro businesses and SMEs. The company also ensures easy and convenient connectivity that will help their business grow.

By simply sending a text message, micro businesses will be able to easily and instantly reach more than 3,000 micro financing institutions across the country and help them get a head start on their business. All it takes is a single text message to 2073 to find the nearest MFI in Metro Manila or in the provinces, and get its exact address and contact number.

To find an MFI in Metro Manila, simply type MICRO [space] FIND [space] NAME OF CITY and send to 2073. For micro entrepreneurs in the provinces, search for an MFI by texting MICRO [space] FIND [space] NAME OF PROVINCE [comma] NAME OF TOWN to 2073. This service is exclusive to Globe subscribers at only P1.50 per text message.

To know more about other Globe services for micro businesses and SMEs, call the hotline number 730-2.000 or visit www.mc.globe.com.ph.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo launched the Micro Asenso! Text Facility last July 9. With the President are (from left) Micro Finance Program Committee Chair Edgar Generoso, and Presidential Management Staff Chief and Malacañang's Oversight Officer for Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Sec. Cerge Remonde.

Globe Business (from left) Marketing Services Manager, Anna T. Cruz; Marketing Services Head, Cielo Javier-Santos; Marketing Head, Aileen S. Asenjo; SME Business Group Head, Marissa Viesca; Loyalty Manager, Red Ergalejo; Segment Head, Michelle Perlas; and, Alliances and Regional Marketing Head, Cinpu Reyes.

Also at the launch of the Micro Asenso! Text Facility are (from left) Globe Business Marketing Head, Aileen S. Asenjo; PCFC Head of Operations Julia Valdez; PCFC Vice-President for Construction, Noel Pino; and Globe Segment Head, Michelle Perlas.

GIL GENIO - "Think big and start small. To help the Filipino entrepreneur take the first small steps toward achieving big dreams, we at Globe Telecom saw the Micro Asenso Text Facility as a first small step. But we know that, by linking with our country's micro finance institutions, we have helped build economic step of considerable importance."

In photo are (from left) Globe Telecom President and CEO Gerardo Ablaza, Jr., Micro Finance Program Committee Chair Edgar Generoso, and Innove Communications CEO Gil Genio.

GERARDO ABLAZA, JR. - "It is with pride that we present our simple answer. The Micro Asenso! Text Facility aids every micro-entrepreneur by pointing him to the nearest microfinance institution in his vicinity. It's a simple step, but to the micro-entrepreneur, a crucial one. If the job of the business owner is to dream big, then perhaps we can help him start working on his dreams beginning with such small, convenient strides.

We at Globe believe that the Filipino entrepreneur deserves all the help he can get. By building a concrete bridge between his dreams and his destiny, we help build a country that ensures business growth by helping its citizens build businesses of their own."

SEC. CERGE REMONDE - "This text service partnership between Globe Telecom and microfinance program committee of our GFIs and BOC Cs adds to the convenience, reach and access of SMS. Indeed, our MSME program today represents the convergence of the latest in communications technology, the innovations in business advocacy, and the time-tested traditions of honest work and industry as the key to success.

I am confident that the lofty targets set by the President, Her Excellency Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, will be met, and perhaps exceeded, as government and private sector continue to work together, in partnership for the common good and greater service to the people."

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo checked the Micro Asenso! Text Facility and located the MFI in her hometown, Lubao, Pampanga.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor at the launching of the Micro Asenso! Text Facility last July 9. With the President are (from left) Micro Finance Program Committee Chair Edgar Generoso, Presidential Management Staff Chief and Malacañang's Oversight Officer for Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Sec. Cerge Remonde, Globe Telecom President and CEO Gerardo Ablaza, Jr., and Innove Communications CEO Gil Genio.

LIFESTYLE

The Baywalk massacre

BAYWALK with its casinos and other attractions before the new Luneta dispensation.

ELIMINATE YOUR SPEECH VIRUSES
KIDDIE ACADEMY

Musical bands drew people to Baywalk and made it alive and safe. Now Baywalk without the bands is dead. And you could get mugged there

By Pedro Dumanos
Contributor

THE RECENT DECISION BY Mayor Lim to get rid of the Baywalk bands is anti-musician and anti-artist. The bugaboo says the mayor's reasons for banning the bands is that some of the female musicians wore sexy clothes. It took decades for the perception that bands were synonymous with drugs to be corrected. Now a mayor is associating bands with pornography.

That is very absurd. He proposed a even more absurd: hiring those bands with "talented students who play native instruments."

This is a case of artist's persecution. If the mayor is really worried about scantily clad girl musicians, why doesn't he try stopping primetime TV dancers?

They're the ones who are lewd, their boobs and bottoms popping out of the TV screen like a formula, a nation's daily dose that insults women, an act happening in broad daylight, daily with coverage resulting living worse when children can see them, reaching even the farthest tribes where native instruments are played by musicians.

The mayor's thinking that taken means playing native instruments is simplistic and insensitive. Or maybe he was ill-advised by an uninformed mind capable of saying only the asinine? A very very dangerous thing, indeed.

Respected musicians

The bands or musicians who play along Baywalk are vested and not at all the same as described by Mayor Lim. Some of them, at last, are serious and respected musicians, and if the mayor had visited Baywalk more often and listened closely to the bands, some do play "native instruments."

Yes, we have observed most of them do covers, the so-called requests, but for the mayor's information, the requests are the same Pinoy musicians who perform at hotel lobbies, cruise ships and bars all over the world—they are Filipinos whom we can be proud of.

Like the OFWs, the rajaves have contributed in keeping our economy afloat. If they are performing in Baywalk, it is either because they're waiting for the new contract or simply just honing their skills for the next luxury ship to book.

For the love of music, the rajaves are all willing to perform in Baywalk for a pittance compared to what they would be paid performing abroad. For a mere 10 drinks and a few hundreds, these musicians have opted to keep playing rather than end up getting nasty and what is a few weeks of shutting the music in the Kapuso Pinoys, particularly, the rasses?

Mindless decision

But then, comes this mindless decision by a mayor whose real motivation could actually be to erase anything that is associated with Erap predecessor.

It reminds us of how our administration after another after Marcos would shun all that had the stamp of Imelda or those whom if they were bourgeois and cultural centers. It's ugly politics that destroys this nation. Done with Baywalk.

What the mayor could have done or could still do is just get rid of the excesses of some business establishments and retain the good stuff, including the rajaves.

As for the students who could play native instruments, we think it is better for them to

A blast from Tita King

The 88-year-old National Artist has just finished an opera

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
CONTRIBUTOR

LUCRECIA Kasilag
PHOTOGRAPHER

NATIONAL ARTIST Lucrecia R. Kasilag turns 89 on Aug. 31. She is completely blind and barely able to speak, and yet, with an assist from close friend Fides Cayugan Asensio, the opera star, Tita King (as she is known to all and sundry) has just composed a new work.

She is the music for an opera, "Why Flowers Bloom in May," with libretto in English and lyrics in Tagalog by Asensio. The work is based on a legend retold by Johnny C. Poncy.

It tells of the Sun King (King Bayot) and his love for the beautiful earth girl, Maria, who stands for her flowers in the secret way in the Little Prince's fantasie de Saint-Exupéry tale ("Le Petit Prince").

When the eyes of the sun prince see clouds for Maria, Orb the Moon, the Sun God's envoy, intervenes. They live an idyllic life in the constellation Aries when her flowers on earth are destroyed by environmental abuse. Maria, asked by her lover, returns to earth so the flowers can bloom again in May, the month of flowers in the Philippines.

Chances are this opera will not be performed until early next year. Expected to play the role of the Sun King is tenor Nayer Salcedo, with his Fides (Giannalaya Bert Asensio) as Maria, young Nicole Lucrel Asensio as the Moon, and Prima Ballerina Lisa Macuja as the Dance Narrator.

Moving drama

How the music came to be composed is a moving drama in itself. Kasilag and Asensio have ties that go back eons ago to the Philippine Women's University Conservatory (now School) of Music, founded by Felicia Tomas, a noted singer who once performed in Milan. (The PWU School of Music, now headed by Dean Mirodi Gaboig, is celebrating its 84th anniversary this year.)

FIDES Cayugan-Asensio
HOUSEHOLD

"Writing encouraged Tita King, then a piano major, and gave her potential as a composer," recalls the diva. "There were no women composers at the time. My relationship with Tita King then was as a very scared student. She was too demanding and formidable, looking down on us over her spectacles, nervous condition."

She did not discover the history and variety side of the composer until "I became her song guinea-pig, as she experimented with a lot of styles. From her singer I became her colleague when I wrote a theater piece for her at PWU."

When Tita King was confined to her wheelchair, they would still go out to her favorite restaurants and order her favorite pansiteng (pansit), and the singer-librettist became the composer's "chosen barkada" (praniperson).

Finally came the time when Tita King couldn't see and couldn't go out anymore, and she was no longer seen at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. But, says Asensio, "we were still choreographing and I would go to her home, as tended by her ya-ya (nanny) Juliet, and bring her favorite foods. And now I'm back to being all of the above, but with a difference."

The difference was that Asensio sensed Tita King is content that the music is would be their third collaboration) for her new opera.

And so, earlier this year, they buckled down to work, with the National Artist dictating (whimpering) each note to the librettist's lyricist. When learning got the better right, Tita King would clap her hands. But what the notes were saying, she would playfully threaten to eat?

So how does the new work sound?

"It's like a closet, an ethnic mood," says Asensio. "It's very Kasilag, very lyrical, very soulful, as the setting is pre-Spanish. And I suppose, owning her rich aural talent since recent, showing how the mind can overcome the ravages of an aging body and soul."

NOEL Arroyo

She's a regal sight in her Pinay Maroon tresses. But in the province, she rides tricycles to the concerts venues.

When I first saw her ride one in Bacolod, I told a visiting British conductor (here leading the Cebu Youth Orchestra), "I just saw Ingrid take a tricycle on the way to the concert venue and she still looked regal."

The conductor said with humor: "She must have looked like a queen on top of a camel."

Royal touches and perfection abroad her always. Bride-time we go back to the Philippines at least once a year for this concert—it was Pinoneurally, it is a thankless job for both artists and the organizers, but the pianists will threaten to perform *gratis et quam* till age 98.

Deadline extended

The National Music Competition for Young Artists has announced that the deadline for submission of applications for Piano, Voice, Orchestral Music Ensemble, High School Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble and Ballet has been extended to Sep. 27. Call 5535097 for details or visit the NAMCYA website at www.namcya.org.ph

Ayuna recital reset

The Great Performance Series scheduled Aug. 14 has been reset Aug. 23.

The special recital will feature distinguished baritone Noel Ayuna along with guest soprano Rachelle Cevallos and pianist Ronald Arnel Espino as collaborating artist.

The series is sponsored by the Philippine Investment Life Insurance Company on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.

The baritone will also be heard in Bacolod on Sept. 7, 7 p.m., at the Elyu Gloria Hall, with soprano Yvonn Espina.

The concert is for the benefit of the Negros Cultural Foundation, Inc.

For inquiries on the Manila and Bacolod concerts, call (02) 888-7633, 427-2071 or 0920-9264270.

'Disney's Cinderella' to benefit cancer ward

THEMA B. BOMBOMEETS Legacy Association Inc. will present "Disney's Cinderella" as mounted by the Repertory Philippines on Aug. 22, 6:30 p.m. at Onstage, Greenbelt 5, Makati.

The presentation will benefit the RP-PGH Cancer Institute Pediatric Ward.

With a beautiful score, including "If Dreams Is Wish Your Heart Makes" and the classic "BIBBIDI-BOBBIDI-Boo," the musical has been much acclaimed and enjoyed by audiences.

Cris Villonco is Cinderella, Nicolo Manahan is the Prince, while Pinky Marquez plays the Stepmother, and Cesel Consuelo and Cara Saavedra are the Stepsisters.

For tickets, call or text 0917-8014585.

Disney's Cinderella

Kammerchor Manila holds Hong Kong tour

KAMMERCHOR MANILA will have a major concert at St. John's Cathedral in Central Hong Kong.

The group is scheduled to pay a concertary visit at the Philippine Consulate Office in Hong Kong and will hold special concerts for the Mission for Migrant Workers, different Filipino organizations, as well as the group's Fanes' Installation.

It's Hong Kong tour is made possible through the help of Fr. Andrew Chan, dean of the St. John's Cathedral; Fr. Dwight de la Trave, Filipino chaplain of St. John's Cathedral; Fr. Emil Lim of the Philippine Catholic Diocesan Pastoral Center in Hong Kong; and Daisy Mandap, editor in chief of the Sun, the Hong Kong Filipino newspaper.

In preparation for its Hong Kong concert, the choir has been promoting concerts in different parishes. It will perform at the Iloilo Shrine on Aug. 22 (the celebrated concert will be held in Emmanuel Concert at the UST Museum on Aug. 24 at 7 p.m.).

Kammerchor Manila was organized by University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music professor Fidel C. Calalang Jr. and was initially composed of almost of the UST Singers (aka UST Aeolian Singers), which Calalang conducts. Its musical artistry and versatility owes to its diverse repertoire, ranging from classical to modern, Negro spirituals, sacred and pious songs, ethnic and Filipino songs, and instrumental popular songs.

The Baywalk massacre

Homepage G1

reassurance on their smiles and leave the Baywalk right like to the relatives and maybe occasionally on special events, reminisce the Black-Of Grass Scout, Ate Apolo, Philippine, Lakbay Lahi, Mahilig Hawaiki, Mahan, Tahibi, Syrasiek, Kadayagan.

People didn't stroll along the Baywalk at night in the past because even likely they would get mugged. Since it became well lighted and establishments started incorporating live music into their operations, Baywalk became fun and had never been safer.

Where in the world would you see live bands playing every 30 meters? Metro Manilans are, indeed, lucky. Any visitor from the province loved it. Foreigners loved it.

People enjoyed listening to the bands that is now concentrated well with the people. We like families, lovebirds, lovers, and yes, tourists. We love musicians uplifting soul, which attests to the natural musicality of the Pinoys and which explains the Pinoy's genuinely world destinations of the band scene to which the music is set paving the way.

And when does Mayor Lim see? He sees only easy bodies. Could it be that Manila's Dirty Harry is the one with the dirty mind?

PUBLICITY Ingrid Sala Santamaria with Reynaldo Reyes

On the road with RP king and queen of piano concertos

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

LAST MONDAY in Escolar Hall of the Ateneo de Manila University, the Romantic Piano Concerto Journey (RPCJ) of pianists Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes wrapped up its 27th concert in seven years, marked by a standing ovation.

In the audience were senior citizens Gregorio Bituin and Narciso Arriet for Lorenzo Ruiz Lumbera, who were visibly moved by the performance.

This year's leg opened with a performance and master class at University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, followed by a series of performances in several schools, notably the Philippine High School for the Arts (now celebrating its 50th year).

The pianists played to all audiences in all sorts of venues and entertained all kinds of questions, from the profound to the amusing, such as: Why do concertos have to be in three movements? Why couldn't they play in between?

"Of course, nobody can stop you from clapping if you are enjoying what you are hearing, but there are times when artists are distracted when the applause comes in the middle of the piece," said Professor Reyes.

There was no intermission-ing to the gymnasium of Central Adventist Academy in Murcia, Negros Occidental, where in pandemonium ensued outside over the door's performance of Rachmaninoff's "Variations on a Theme by Paganini and Piano Concerto No. 2.

"This concert brought us straight to heaven," said the school head.

When we stopped outside the gymnasium on a clear night with a full moon, we realized this Negros town was to become a majestic mountain and the stars, a perfect setting to hum the melody of Rachmaninoff's last movement carried by imaginative songwriters into "Full Moon and Empty Arms."

We drove straight to Silay City, where the pianists did two concerts at St. Theresita Academy after the performances, the students asked why it was important to feel what they played during a performance.

"Every music has something to communicate, and if performers don't project emotion, you can be sure the music will not have anything to the listeners," said Reyes, who demonstrated how a mechanical playing instrument sounded like.

Silay is the hometown of the first and last Filipino tenors who made a career in Europe—Conchito Zaragoza.

During the open forum, I asked the Silayanons the state of music in the city because in the past as Negros's Little Paris.

"Zero," said Mayor Gaston Lacson.

But not quite. There is an active and vibrant Cultural Heritage Roundtable ensemble duly supported by the city government.

Good breeding

The Silay lifestyle is the epitome of fine taste and good breeding, and I am to be the home of Jenny and Charito Montinola who hosted a lovely dinner after the Silay concerts.

Seated on well-designed wooden chair, listening to Reyes rehearse his Albut pieces in the house of Buddy and Tessy Montinola (their two children belong to another kind: the Bill concerto of Alexandra Tomassi and Gregory Ruiz-Suzara in Bacolod City) with a full view of a table garden and witch hunter's stable at the back, I felt like I was on a scene straight from "Out of Africa."

At St. Scholastica's Academy in Bacolod, piano teachers asked about piano exercises books and piano syllabus and the ideal practice hours for students and professionals.

In Dumaguete City's St. Paul University, what sounded like seven-year-old baby grand and upright pianos greeted the pianists, who had to enter extraordinary effort to make the pianos sound like one—with three concerts in two days!

In the first concert, two notes disappeared from the baby grand. Another key fell silent on the upright and the tuner had to fix something before a performance. In the powerful chords of the Rachmaninoff finale, the piano pianos started to sound like a cross between a guitar and a harpsichord.

But like the end, the audience reception was great. (This should good school audiencing to invest in good musical instruments.)

It felt like a CCP concert when the tuner moved on to 9654-Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra with a reconditioned piano as well as a perfect ball like Henry Lam Auditorium.

Considering the grueling tour, Reyes and Santamaria should be granted 10% King and Queen of Piano Concertos.

What most people don't know is that they don't earn anything from their missionary work. It is a labor of love in the last seven years...a total of 273 concerts with lecturers and open forum for both rich and poor as well as for beginners and seasoned music lovers.

Ingrid Sala Santamaria can teach social functions and bring classical music to all social areas.

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QUALITY VS. QUANTITY: THE CHOICE IS YOURS

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MOONRISE FILMFEST

Revealing secrets under the stones

By Shiring G. Lui
Contributor

A docu on the Guimaras oil spill, 'Syokoy' shows how humanity disintegrates along with the despoliation of nature

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A DOCUMENTARY film lies not in its theater of a subject matter, or in its successful gathering or recording of facts. For, as writers and artists have always known (and despaired), everything that needs to be told has been told.

Therefore, the difference is in the ability of art to approach a familiar story in a new mode, or a general theme in an original manner.

The 2007 Moonrise Film Festival, organized by the Center for Intercontinental Awareness and Education (CIRAE), called for documentary films on environmental issues and cultural concerns. The challenge for filmmakers then was to synthesize an issue, specific but not necessarily unique, and deliver it in such a way that it would create an impact on the audience.

One of those who took up the challenge was "Syokoy," directed by Ray Defiesto Gibrahal, scripted by John Imrell Rodson, and photographed by Oscar M. Nava.

Dramatic hook

The film's beginning deploys an apparently common device: a survey. It poses the questions: What is a coolay? In one believe in coolay?

The first few minutes seem to be a survey of our cultural knowledge of that cold term, but as the film progresses the audience realizes that this is a dramatic hook, and the coolay is a figurative representation for something more serious and profound.

The film also uses a recognizable yet reliably effective device: the portrait of the ordinary. The idyllic scenery of Guimaras' island is skillfully captured, particularly that of a setting sun, framed by the jagged walls of cliffs.

The images of the ordinary soon yield to those of the horror. To echo a mantra from the film, what scenes lie underneath the smooth white stones?

The film's strength lies in its unsparing and intensity. It deftly interweaves three narrative threads: a quest to define a mythical creature; a journey to perform an artistic ritual; and an operation to save the island. The result is a fascinating unfolding of a message that could not fail to produce an impact—emotional and intellectual—on the audience.

The film focuses on the aftermath of the accident of the MT Solar 1 tanker on Aug. 11, 2006. However, the tragedy is not in the sinking of a ship, in the loss of million dollar worth of oil, but in what comes after—the poisoning of the sea, the devastation of marine. And an even greater tragedy follows: the disintegration of humanity.

Horrifying images

The filmmakers use images and characters to tell the story, without any distinguished voice-over interjecting unnecessary comments.

This is a wise move, for the film is able to provoke moments of suspense and shock at the images and of objects: the contemporaneous fruit-vendor, blackened rocks and trees, bluish-shelled crabs, smoky waters, tons of plastic bags, tattered boats, empty nets, children wearing masks, sores on skin, makeshift crucifixes, fearful faces, frowning couples, subdued cries.

As one character says, "We lost the sense of continuity that we had."

The film also inserts little stories, making the tragedy even more encompassing: the jobless villagers scratching off the greasy oil from the rocks, the 200-peso payment given to those who clean up the mess, a drum of pure lumber oil kept in the house to prevent pillars from termites, a boat spraying the waters and waving the sacred.

The rhythmic pace of the visuals is that of heartbeat, mostly but building up, and allowing moments to drag, for the characters to grieve, for the audience to feel and be moved.

Hope and justice

The ending springs glimpses of hope, and calls for justice. A butterfly flutters in the wind as the artists (P.G. Delmago) completes his fish-pen mural of respect to the spirits of the sea. A tiny mangrove sprouting green leaves receives a Buddhist gift from another artist (Dallas Tabinski).

And an old seer warns that the built homes, built lids structures with sharp teeth and nails will strike back to protect what it holds precious.

The recuperation of the sea-creature myth in the filmmaker's personal mission to create and offer his own art to the world, to transcend a local dilemma into a global resonance. This is the artist's way to heal what has been harmed, to underscore the wrong so that right can be done.

The Moonrise Film Festival runs until Aug. 23 at Robinson's Galleria.

Musika Ibarang presents pianist Victor Santiago Asuncion

MUSIKA IBARANG, IN COOPERATION with the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA), GSIS Museum, PHSA Parent Teacher Staff Council, Inc., will feature US-based Filipino pianist Victor Santiago Asuncion in a homecoming concert on Aug. 23, 6:30 p.m., at the GSIS Museum Lower Gallery, CCP Complex (between the Philippine Senate and the Manila Film Center).

ASUNCION

Asuncion's program includes Beethoven's Sonata Opus 1; Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit"; and Liszt's Sonata in B Minor.

Recognized as a pianist of innate musical sensitivity and superb technique, Asuncion received his Doctor of Musical Arts from University of Maryland's Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music; Bachelor of Music from the Hartt Conservatory of Music/Loyola University; graduates of PHSA, Ateneo; debuted with the Manila Chamber Orchestra at age 16.

Memphis pedagogue

Now head of the Piano department at University of Memphis, Asuncion recently conducted master classes recently at the PHSA National Arts Center, Mt. Makiling and at St. Paul University Manila College of Music and the Performing Arts.

The concert is free to the public, but donations will be much appreciated. Donations will fund Musika Ibarang PHSA Music Alumni Association and PHSA Student Projects.

Contact 0926-7374372 or Katherine Ann at 0920-9329210.

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Globe BROADBAND

LIFESTYLE

EUGENIA Duran Apostol delivering her speech on her feet. Beside her is her nephew, Ricardo Ma. D. Nolasco, commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. LOUIE ESPAÑOLA

Eugenia Duran Apostol wows Mindanao

The INQUIRER founder endears herself to Mindanao students and academics with her no-fuss, maternal and effective public speaking style

By Christine F. Godinez-Ortega
Contributor

EUGENIA DURAN APOSTOL, founding chair of the Foundation of Worldwide People Power, came to the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) to walk her talk, literally and the rest of education, and to challenge the MSU-IIT community to "learning tank" it now faces "to maintain an academic environment that spurs social development."

Spunky and full of wit, she walked about while delivering her speech to the 4,000 students, faculty, staff, guests and university officials led by MSU president Dr. Ricardo de Leon and MSU-IIT chancellor Marcelo D. Soliman during the MSU-IIT 39th Charter Day celebrations recently. The night was the most energizing image of her I've seen in my 30 years as an academic and administrator.

Admittedly, the MSU-IIT gets it not the political piece for a speaker to deliver a speech. The Rev. Fr. Eduardo C. Olaviar, Ateneo de Cagayan, last year's Charter Day speaker, had to stop in the midst of his speech a few times because the students in the bleachers were noisy. She learned later that they could not hear a word of his speech.

But was what Dorian Apostol, or Tita Eggie for me, wanted in order to die carrying the audience, majority of them young people, behind her ears to speak once.

APOSTOL with MSU-IIT chancellor Marcelo P. Soliman (left) and MSU president Dr. Ricardo de Leon (middle). LOUIE ESPAÑOLA

Our ears turned as wide open as Tita Eggie's when she didn't go up the stage and when she left the lectern hastily set up on the gym floor to start walking, holding her written speech on one hand and a wireless microphone in the other.

Always an effective communicator and a seasoned editor, she ran our portions of her speech, interacting with the audience, stopping now and then on the gym floor, waiting for the applause or response from the bleachers, with her nephew, Dr. Ricardo Ma. Nolasco, UP Diliman linguistics professor and chief commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education, by her side.

Not many speakers of the 30-year old MSU-IIT had made a strong impact on their audience as Tita Eggie. Up to now, students are still talking about her style of delivery and her message of a better life through education.

Tita Eggie's scene during the Charter Day program was strong and deconstructed, but she had rewritten earlier about how and what she would say because she said she did not usually accept speaking engagements, declining. "I'm not a good speaker."

Tita Eggie's lack of effective ease was surprising. She said what she felt and had carried only a coat and a bag for her trip to Iligan.

Concern for others

Most of all, her concern for others and her appreciation of the little things provided by her hosts shone through. I learned further she preferred seafood, her roots are in Surigao, like my mother, a pantikbalhin, but otherwise, she has no dietary restrictions.

"For a little anything," she said. Later in the evening, she shivered as hers a glass of water would cup her day.

One of the things Tita Eggie loves, we found out, tea, are plants. She "threatened" to take some of the orchids under cover of darkness at the Dipan hotel where she and Ricky stayed, if she failed to buy plants from local stores. The gift of gastronomic red hinge from the garden of the Mararang Macapagal Home facilitated by caretaker Cherie Villarosa simply made her happy.

On hindsight, my sense was that outside office meetings at certain moments. As Political Science professor Darwin Marcelino and 4th English major Philip Mandagay and Bed Leon Nicolas Maranda, and I drove on the highway to Iligan from the Cagayan de Oro airport that morning with Tita Eggie and Ricky, we met President Macapagal-Arroyo coming back from, we heard, Dinagat City.

Certainly, Tita Eggie's curiosity is a journalist (but exhaled story. Her inspiration to young writers "I, her passion for truth, justice, freedom, have been the essence of her life as she continues to demonstrate the country's social and educational systems, educators being a great leader and a liberating influence on humanity. It is this latter passion (Sister Ann) that is making her busy and...it seems, youthful as ever.

An inspiration to young writers

By Fatimah P Imam
Contributor

I grew up reading the INQUIRER and I am inspired by its founder's example of always putting value on telling the truth

ONE DAY WHEN I was barely three, according to my father, I saw our neighbor reading a newspaper in the yard, her legs crossed, the paper spread wide open before her. The next day, dad said he found me holding a copy of the day's paper upside-down, reciting stuff that I made up and imitating what I had seen the day before.

I grew up reading the Philippine Daily Inquirer. I have fond memories of reading the comic relief page as a child, following Dad between how many comic titles as they came and went (Batman, Slim, Blim), with comic still running to date (Poged Bubot for almost a decade now, I'm sure since I can remember). In school I always had a knack for journalism: I wrote my first feature piece in grade four (updated every opportunity to write in the school paper, and now that I'm in college, I run several recurring pieces).

When the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) celebrated its Charter Day I saw for the first time the woman born whose papers I've been reading and columnists I learned how to read at five, and from reading whose pieces I was able to recognize the significant role of journalism. That afternoon, I met Eugenia Duran Apostol in the flesh.

Dressed in an all-brown and clear with accessories which are knots has unmistakably stood up to presidents with her publications) isn't entirely a daily thing, on pun intended. When I got to interview Ms. Apostol, she was gracious, accommodating, and remarkably inquisitive, making a joking comment on the length of this year's Charter Day theme, "Commitment to Excellence Through Brainwash Audience) on Integrity and Accountability."

When asked about how the theme clashed with the adversarial attitude that journalists have to take, Ms Apostol replied matter of fact-ly, "So long as there's integrity, accountability, you cannot possibly make a mistake in being adversarial. Are you saying you'd rather have this than the other one?" She immediately paused. Just point as I could only answer that I would of course opt for integrity.

Formidable reputation

Ms Apostol made a reputation as a person who put value in telling the truth. Not sometimes it's more popular for people to lie, to take out an adversarial attitude," she reflected. "But in journalism you have to be also balanced, and you have to balance it with accountability and integrity." But was she just no need to convince me, for she was a person behind the paper with the infamous slogan, "Balanced News, Fearless Views."

"I studied in the University of Santo Tomas where there is no freedom," she revealed, her voice taking on a note of excitement. "That is my first time [in a university with] academic freedom. I was actively involved in the campus press as a writer/editor and columnist. I was also a member of the debating society."

Ms Apostol's passion for writing and journalism is evident in the way she speaks about her work. Her face lights up as she talks about her days in the campus press, and she speaks with a fervor that makes me wish I had been there to witness her in her prime.

New titles from UST Publishing House

IN CONNECTION WITH THE MANILA INTERnational Book Fair 2007 on Aug. 29-Sept. 3 at the World Trade Center (WTC), is Rizal Boulevard, Pasay City, the UST Publishing House (USTPH) will hold the first part of its annual book launching on Aug. 30, 3 p.m. at the Makati Skyline Restaurant, WTC.

Some 25 new titles from various fields and disciplines, including literature, theology, and alternative medicine, will be unveiled by UST Rector Fr. Ernesto M. Ateso, O.P. Secretary General Fr. Isidro C. Abano, O.P. and USTPH director Jocelyn T. Calimbahan. The second part of the annual book launching is set February 2008.

USTPH has been publishing at least 40 books a year since 2005 as we gear up with 400 books when UST marks its quadricentennial anniversary in 2011.

Some of the new titles are:

"UST Theology Week 2005 Eucharist: Pilch Mary" is a compilation of the proceedings that manifests studies and discourses centering on Mary and the Eucharist. "Theology Week 2006-Vatican II: 40 Years After" addresses itself to and showcases some of the theological developments that have occurred since 1965, the closing of the council's agglomerations. Both books are edited by Jose Antonio Acevedo, O.P. and Richard Ang, O.P.

Co-published by the Instituto Cervantes, "El A Filipino Writer Reads Quijote" assembles lectures and essays by Alfred Yuson, Vicente Groyon and National Artist F. Sionil Jose on Cervantes' "Don Quijote."

Noted Divine Word priest and academician Hermigildo F. Bacarrisa comes up with a two-volume book that discusses the ties between Germany and the Philippines in "Philippine-German Relations: A Modern History (1864-2006)." Vols. 1 and 2. The book traces the centuries-old ties between the two countries from their modern history of trade and commerce to significant political events that happened on both countries—the EDSA revolution in 1986 and the Berlin Wall Collapse in 1989.

Comprehensive and encompassing, "Legal Writing" penned by Judge Adolfo C. Dayanan is a work that seeks to improve law students' and lawyers' writing prowess.

"Passion for Catechesis" is a collection of articles and talks by Cardinal Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi, O.P., one of the country's leading churchmen. The book, divided in three parts, presents the author's more than 20 years of dedication to the catechetical ministry both at the national and diocesan levels.

Archbishop Legaspi compiles his talks and homilies in "Heart To Heart: Journeying With The Priests In Prayerful Reflection."

Respected entertainment journalist Boy Villasenor presents the fascinating world of entertainment in all its historical and cultural richness in "Breyaktuwang Pampelikula Sa Pilipinas: [Movie Reporting in the Philippines]."

"Dinanum Umbrellas Notes Toward A Geisenthusiasm" is by young poet and National Book awardee, Angelo S. Suarez. The poetry collection draws much of its content and form from modern and contemporary media influences, pop culture and sociality.

"Lutay Sa Isipan," edited by Cirilo Bautista, is an anthology of poems by some of the best new voices in Philippine poetry.

"Dreams and Rivers" is a collection of poems by a priest, Fr. Philip Bayabas of the Archdiocese of Naga, and an IT specialist, Jonathan Villar, who collaborated on poems touching on the Catholic faith, Bicol culture and the creative process of writing poetry.

Jose Victor Torres' book, "En Transition: UST During The American Colonial Period," chronicles the changes that occurred in UST during the first 37 years (1899-1935) of American colonial rule.

"Bantigong Id Bandalong" by historian Asejo, is a collection of stories touching on isolation, migration and diaspora that are written in both Filipino-ness and Filipino.

"Bahay Pinoy: Mga Piling Istoryang Arkitektura," collects selected interviews and articles written by former creative Bulletin-turned-feature writer Fanny Garcia.

Award-winning playwright Glicin Sevilla Mas comes up with his third book, "Children of the Sun and in the Land of the Giants," a collection of plays that echoes the rhythm, cadence of Ilias' native Kinaray language.

"The Tagalog Region: Lexicon of the Language and Its Speech," by Constantino B. Aldave Yap, is a comprehensive reference for language researches, lexicon enthusiasts, phonology experts and students who wish to deepen their knowledge of the languages and dialects of the Tagalog region.

Artists get fellowship grants

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (Philippines) (ACCP) announces this year's recipients of fellowship grants who will observe, conduct research, and study their respective artistic specializations.

They are Josefina Estrella (Theater), ACC Philippines Fellowship Program; Hiyas Alejo Hila (Music), ACC Philippines Fellowship Program; Grace Nono (Music), Mundo'm Oriental Fellowship; Jerijon Botar Wisp (Painting, Sculpture), Porter & Rice Corp Fellowship; and Hladilan by Ta mamente (Cinema Photography), Nation Fellowship.

The announcement was made in a press conference recently held at Milky Way Restaurant on Dona Road, Makati.

In her opening remarks, Ambassador Isabel Cuni Wilson, a member of the ACCP board of trustees, said that the grant was given to deserving Filipinos artists to hone further their expertise abroad and return to the country as share their gained knowledge.

Ms. Lourdes R. Gamboa, another trustee, informed the guests about a fashion benefit slated next year. The ACCP Foundation collaborates with the Asian Cultural Council in raising funds to support fellowship grants. Gamboa hosted the Filipino lunch.

MICHIKO Yamamoto, Grace Nono and Jose Estrella

Ernest L. Escaler, chair of the board, led other members in attendance: Leon G. Lozada, (treasurer); Rajo Laurel, and the rock Reyno. Other members are Ms. Isabel G. Daggio, president; Atty. Jose Reyes, corporate secretary; Gabrielle Santos, Karla D'Delgado, Rina Dela, Jude C. Nanes, and ACC director Ralph Samuelson.

Grateful

The gracious acknowledge the generosity of the ACCP for the donors' director Estrella, the grant will be for means of "re-energizing," in order to know the latest trend in film and digital technology and to see in the stores in the US, and how it can be applied locally in keeping abreast with technological advances abroad.

Film and television screenwriter Yamamoto say that her grant will enable her to examine Filipino-Japanese intermarried relations as she aims to "find her other half" in Japan and thereby help promote a happy understanding of two cultural worldviews.

New ethnic singer Nono emphasizes the importance of the Filipino new ethnic singer, who is yet to be heard on the international stage. Her grant to undertake research in the US will allow her to visit heritage centers, conduct study on oral traditions, and attend world festivals. The country has a rich and enduring heritage in oral tradition, and keeping them alive and part of the living tradition is a must.

For painter Wisp, represented by Isidro Gomez Medrano Jr. who heads the Visual, Literary and Media Arts of the CCP, the grant will allow him to continue a lasting passion for the intertwining of the arts, visual as well as performing, all in keeping with the current trend of transdisciplinary work.

Irene Raila, program officer, represented pianist Hiyas A. Hila, whose study for Doctor in Musical Arts in Piano Performance is made possible with an ACC grant at University of Minnesota. It was the same grant that enabled her to complete her master's degree in Piano Performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 2004-2005.

Hila's study in the US, Raila said, has honed her talent as she continues to gain more exposure and knowledge in her field, which she intends to share with others when she comes home to teach and perform.

Love of the arts

Indeed, philanthropy promotes the arts, said Teresa Rances, program representative of ACC in Manila.

Whatever the foundation gets through its fund drive, goes straight to the grantees, added Reyes.

The grantees' work grants is answer, he added, all for the love of the arts, and of course, humankind.

The ACC established the Philippine Fellowship Program (PFP) in 2000 to offer more opportunities to deserving artists, scholars and cultural exponents. The PFP was created in partnership with the ACC Philippines Foundation, which collaborates with the ACC in raising funds, resulting in more grants that have helped the arts community soar ethereal.

Since the 1960s, the ACC has provided grants to over 300 artists and scholars in the country, most of whom have gained prominent leadership positions in their respective fields.

The ACC Philippine Foundation undertakes an annual fund-drive for the benefit of the ACCP Fellowship Program that funds the approved grants determined by ACC New York. The latter matches the contribution of ACCP thus enabling the program to give more grants.

Individuals and institutions who wish to apply for grant support should send a brief description of their plans to the Asian Cultural Council's Office in New York by Jan. 1 of the year. Visit ACC's website at http://www.asiancultural council.org.

LOUIE Locsin, Patrick Reyno, Ernest Escaler, Amb. Isabel Wilson, Rajo Laurel and Malu Gamboa

Sports success stories

"A TIME TO SOAR: ISSUING IN #1 82" by Jade T Reaper and the San Rudy Jessamy Club chronicles the San Pedro Bird Lions' rise from a long championship drought to victory in the 2006 season of the NOAA.

"Tiger's New Swing" by John Andersant is a fascinating look at what happens when golf's greatest champion takes one of the biggest chances of his career—trying to change an already great swing into a truly great swing—and succeeds.

"Will 1962: The Night of 100 Points and the Dawn of a New Era" by Gary III. Pomeranz covers in on March 2, 1962, when Chamberlain scored 100 points in an NBA game against the New York Knicks.

Playing in a ball full auditorium in Orchard, PA, he leads history by breaking a team and an entire sport to his will.

Get away from the Rush and start building your successful team today with "Coaching Team Basketball," by Tom Crean and Ralph Pim, a one-of-a-kind, step-by-step guide toward effective teamwork.

"Tweaks are the Lowest Lessons on Business and Golf from America's Top Executives," by David Symcox, takes a fresh look at the interesting models of golf and businesses.

All books are available at Fashion Book Store.

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPH BY JOSS ARREN

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY NIK JUNIOR

MUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEPANGS BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

KYOKO AND MOODY BY LYNN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEPHEN PASCUAL

KIKO NACHINE BY RAMON ARREN

HIKAKODOMOS BY JOMIE TEJADA

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATJIH HILARIDAD

SEEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a vivid imagination, at times, it almost manipulates you. You're a private individual, and you're very charming. You like to seek out activities where you can escape into another world and forget your responsibilities. You're a dreamer, a romantic and self-starter. You also always offer all kinds of fresh opportunities and new avenues for you. Interesting.

Birthdays of: Greg Kinn, author; Richard Pratt, singer/songwriter; Joan Allen, actress.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			5					7
	1	8	4			2	9	
	6			7			4	
6	4			9		8		
			6	4	1			
		9		2			3	6
	3		8				2	
	8	7			4	6	1	
5					2			

Difficulty Level ★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every solution, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
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Answer to previous puzzle

4	1	2	8	6	9	3	5	7
9	6	5	7	1	3	4	2	8
3	7	8	4	5	2	9	1	6
5	4	7	2	3	8	1	6	9
6	3	1	9	7	5	8	4	2
2	8	9	1	4	6	7	3	5
7	9	3	5	2	1	6	8	4
8	5	6	3	9	4	2	7	1
1	2	4	6	8	7	5	9	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

LIFESTYLE

BOHOLANO home cooking is served under the painted dome of the Dauis carrosela.

Old 'conventos' in Baclayon and Dawis in Bohol have become bed-and-breakfast establishments that blend heritage and commerce, continuity and practicality

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

SOME Baclayon heritage homes share traditional Boholano hospitality with their bed-and-breakfast guests

What are we to do with heritage white elephants?

DESPITE THE GROWING campaign to save Philippine heritage, the honest truth is that a lot (or most) of the heritage structures we campaign to save are really white elephants.

When are we to do with these white elephants?

On the verge of becoming white elephants are our World Heritage-inscribed Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera.

A site of incomparable beauty, the rice terraces are one of the few places on our planet where natural and cultural heritage combine to produce a landscape of multicolor, leaving the struggle for the place to keep up with the 21st century leads to the question, is heritage enough?

Heritage might be enough for inanimate objects, stuff for display like empty architectural monuments or valuable objects locked up under glass in museums that are lifeless markers of the past.

A place like the rice terraces, unquestionably a marker of Philippine heritage, is far from being an area's connection to the past, enshrined in museum like stillness.

For centuries the terraces' traditional practices—cultural, religious, environmental, agricultural, hydrological and artistic—revolved around the rice-growing cycle, supporting the life of inhabitants. Massive migration out of the terraces is proof that the traditional lifestyle has become extremely difficult to maintain today, leading to an endless search for solutions that will update the tough Cordillera lifestyle while maintaining cultural roots.

Unlike similar rice-growing mountain terraces in China that have long been abandoned, the terraces of the Philippine Cordillera aren't relics. The terraces, however, stands for ways to maintain their connections to human life.

Relics of the past deserve to continue living. Once it was thought that the best thing to do with an old tipanoh colonial-era house was to ruin it into a museum, or many houses stopped being homes and turned into crystal-like museums, each displaying exquisite collections of furniture and heritage.

The museums as total antidote to the past even through collections of objects from a bygone era that make no connection to daily life today.

Bed-and-breakfast

There are heritage homes that now have recently learned to make use of their past as a resource to connect to their present. Owners develop their heritage homes as a resource and ready to generate additional income to improve their way of living but also to provide financial means to continue conserving their heritage properties.

Through the bed-and-breakfast program, heritage homes continue to be used and be useful rather than stagnate into lifeless museum displays or fall into disrepair and decay.

Owners of a group of heritage homes in the historic town of Baclayon in Bohol have formed a bed-and-breakfast association, initially offering a total of over 20 rooms in neighboring houses. Converting considerable income as guest lodgings sees heritage positively as an income-generating resource, as a source of pride and local identity, and, most important, keeps the heritage alive and up to date.

And as a tourism experience, the hospitality offered by the homeowners is priceless.

"ATHOME Tiny Shell/Ocean Sun" (above) and "When Sky and Flight Collide," mixed media, digital art distortion

New media works by '... music video director ...

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIP... pines presents "Parallel Worlds," an exhibition of new media works by Jaime Pacena II at the Onofre Gallery, ste Silvestre (2nd floor hallway). The show formally opens Aug. 22, 6 p.m., and runs till Oct. 7.

Pacena "Parallel Worlds" explores digital-based materials in print and in video. his tackles his own observation on the parallelism of the worlds we all live in, the human psyche, the paradoxes of human coincidence and situations.

Pacena is a fine ... versity of Santo To... video director, ... wrote "a Glow G" ... which features ... ers, musicians and ...

For details regar... tan J. Pacena at ... no_jap@yahoo.com ... Or contact the C...

CCP gallery hou... and 6 p.m. daily e... days.

Admission is free.

The art of the line

By Constantine C. Tejero

BIBLIOTHEQUE CARIBERA HAS BEEN trying to expand the limits of the art so that his artworks have started to look like intergalactic drawings. In fact, he's been calling his pieces "island lost in space."

These relatively been-mentioned recurring engravings or monochromatic flat lines on flat surfaces should have seen his recent exhibit "Lines Beneath the Images" in Candido Gallery at the Artwork, 1-4...bldg. 4, Sitt Bhrgmald, Mandaluyong City.

One of the few, if not the only one, practitioners of lino-engraving in the country, Cabrera exhibited on a grant at Atelier Lizzie Grant in Paris. He represented the country in international print competitions and print art festivals in Kochi, Tokyo and Busan.

The richness of his art could be appreciated in his latest exhibit of 10 pieces. The finesse of execution and sophistication of sensibility come through every piece.

The best drawing lines are also masterful music and flat as in traditional engraving, but by using circular and radial expressions, crosshatching and spirals, he has imbued every piece with an illusion of swelling results, of palpable sentimentality.

Unearthly look

More significantly, he has engraved his designs on clear acrylic plastic squares and rectangles, and either arranged these pieces in parallel series or combined them into new ones. The resulting artworks, both serial pieces and individual boxes, are three-dimensional engravings that can stand be sculptural pieces.

"It is an attempt to articulate the art of the line as in its breadth," says Cabrera, "and to explore the possibilities of its application, the properties of its movement and synergy in its field of reference...on a flat surface and in three-dimensional space," he says.

Simply said, he just wants to "un-realize and externalize" the characteristics of one of the elements of design, which are line, itself by removing ink from with the ability to penetrate the surface, he believes he is able to "express their complexity and similarity."

The superimposition of lines in space results to an unearthly appearance that invokes foggy luminosity in combination, astronomic or celestial, depending on the direction and the color of the light. "Ethereal" accurate to describe the effect.

The exhibition also include the objects behind the artwork, which, seen through the transparent planes, can create various colors and for the emerging with the engraved design. Or even the objects in front of the artwork, which can have shadows and thus transform the design.

Visual tension

In a way this is sophisticated art, yet there are fixed pieces, permanence in consistency and construction. It must be the artist's intention to create that kind of visual tension.

On elaboration: "These images try to convey the existence of opposites or polarities in physical energy... square forms with free-flowing lines, square and circle, creation versus decay, light versus shadow."

The technique of superimposing a series of engraved plastic plates is meant to create "vanishing of shapes and lines, gone in one sense and connecting parts, and areas of space appearing to be realized in others. "These contradictions and opposing ... are fitting references in nature, in ... plastic, it is the very subject of study by the artists.

An assistant professor at St. Scholastica's College Department of Fine Arts, with a master's degree from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, Cabrera can make a simple theory sound high-minded. But what he describes as his attempt to boost the instrumentality of the line does, indeed, "transcend the visual dimension of perception."

Large Luz paintings on exhibit

GALERIE JOAQUIN IS PRESENTING a show of large works by National Artist Arturo Luz, blg. 34 to Sept. 9.

Last April, a 2002 24" x 48" work by Luz, "Three Black Objects," was sold at $22,500, or approximately P968,800, in Singapore by Sotheby's.

Last year, during Luz's 80th birthday anniversary, a 2003 work sized 42" x 52" was put by Christie's at the crest of off-the-floor auctions catalogue and his piece sold for approximately P4.2 million.

Titled "Large Paintings, Performers and Ancient Cities", the show's main focus are six seven works sized 48" x 60" or 4' x 5'.

These are two works on "Bombedial" (1992), two "Cities of the Past" (2003) and three "Performers" (2004).

Aside from the seven large paintings, included in the show are 34 smaller works, 12 works on ancient Cities and 12 works on Performers.

The beginnings for the main pieces "Bombedial" as well as for the "Cities of the Past" series came from Luz's 1990 extended visit to various Asian countries.

An artist Gil Reyes in the book, "Artists Luz," describes what happened next. "Inspired by his Asian travels, Luz constructed a utopian architecture out of the ancient temples, forts and palaces that have survived the onslaught of warriors, oblivion and cannibalism, and the ravages of weather and time."

"BORDBODUR" (1992)

Luz describes the resultant paintings as recollections of the Asian pilgrimage. "They are not literal, but rather composite images from memory."

In Gil Reyes's book, Luz recalls having started painting cityscapes sometime in the early 1950s. He had seen someone riding a bicycle minus many seated in front of the handlebar while a passenger behind him. He found this scene "an Filipino" that he made a painting out of it. He added a cruising basin in one of the figures and called it Sagang Tasse. He has been painting cityscapes since.

"MUSICIAN and a Cyclist" (1991)

"MUSICIAN and a Juggler" (1993)

During the same period, there were people who would go door-to-door around Metro Manila, usually in pairs, with an odd combination of musical instruments such as common acoustic, clarinet and drum, usually playing some form of unintelligible jazz. It was to capture scenes like these that Luz started his Musicians series.

In Spain, while on a study grant from the Institute de Cultura Hispanica, he likewise saw a group of Spanish musicians, which eventually led to his obsession. He has since painted many times.

The musicians came into his paintings sometime in 1954. He first painted them as if in a concert pole, standing one on top of the other.

It is these statements, cyclists and acrobats that have become the main subjects of his now highly popular Performers series.

Luz was named National Artist for Painting in 1997. He studied at the UST School of Fine Arts, then received a scholarship in the California College of Arts and Craft in Oakland for a three-year diploma in art program. He continued his education in the Slade Art Museum Art School in New York in 1950 and at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris in 1951.

Gabriel Joaquin Mafia is at 371 E Gonzaga St. and Intramuros Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan, Metro Manila. Call 7126213, 7126418 and 7126418; e-mail galerie_joaquin2002@yahoo.com.

Lando' Pacena

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...Francisco's at 469-6445) ...galeriefrancisco@...

...e"

"MORE Than a Woman I"

"WWII Series 4"

"MORE Than a Woman 2"

Hermes Alegre's abstract muse

HERMES ALEGRE REVEALS A WORLD new aspect of his art in "More Than a Woman," his latest solo show now available at 1/L of Gallery 12nd level of Serendra across Market Market!, Bonifacio Global City).

Alegre, who is known for his paintings of beautiful women amid lush greenery, presents, on this new occasion, abstractions.

While he retains his dreams to only two works, he injects another form of his passion in bolder strokes, a bit rough and regular, reminiscent of the artist's brand of personal charm.

His latest foray into abstracts includes the use of black, white, and gray with hints of red, yellow and purple, the texture of which are previews of what the artist has up to store.

Alegre is quick to declare though that these works are not indicative of a totally different direction he intends to pursue totally later. He describes the setting as a brave start save reticent in value may become rare works in the future.

Notable in the new collection is a homage to Alegre's hometown of Cauayan. Called the "More" series, the works are inspired by the time that Alegre lived for a few years by the shores there. They are also inspired by the optimism that his first region has ever. These pieces, which include the silhouette females, celebrate the triumph of the human spirit and the Ilocos people's—and the Philippines's—resilience amid adversity.

Hermes's wings are not on his heels. Rather, they are on his artist's realms ... with no reference to mediums, but to getting his message through.

Call 902 2322 or text 09175249444 for details.

"WWII Series 6"

Visual Arts

Barrio quiapo is at West

Antero Barrio quiapo's latest exhibit, "Broken," featuring works in oil, runs until Aug. 25 at West Gallery, 4/L, Bldg A., 3M Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Barrio quiapo treats his canvas as a journal, diligently painting feelings, inspirations and encounters he can't otherwise express artistically with words. A fine arts graduate of UST, Barrio quiapo has also shown in Singapore. He received the CCP Thirteen Artists award in 2005. CATHERINE

Castillo at UP Visayas

Anthony Castillo presents "Bathworks," featuring this pair and ink drawings, until Aug. 31 at the University of the Philippines Visayas Art Gallery, Iloilo City. Castillo is a psychology major from University of San Agustin, where he was literary editor and artist of the Augustinian Mirror. "Clothworks" is a visual journal of his bouts with bipolar disorder. Call 33 79 09 or 396 852 804 80.

Camera Club marks 80th year

The Camera Club of the Philippines marks its 80th year with a photo exhibit, "Elements," at the CCP Gallery of the Ayala Museum, until Aug. 29. The exhibit showcases images of the four basic elements of nature: earth, wind, fire and water, as seen through the lenses of members of the club. The exhibit will mark its second life in Metro Manila in September and October. Visit www.ayalamuseum.org.

Anti-TV drawings in Baguio

Anak TV and Raguio Museum presents an exhibit of drawings by Nic Fabricano, "Lakeang Tivik, Pabidaro, Aliba, Cuan Tayo," at the Museum Hall on Governor Pack Road in Baguio City until Aug. 26. Over 40 pen-and-ink drawings depict characters in a satirical game that employs child vulnerability and killer action, rather than bullets, which are later con-

"LUKSONG Tivik, Pabidaro, Aliba, Cuan Tayo"

tentions that are fostered by television and the multimedia. Call 3147000.

"Maximum Tolerance" in Iloilo

Lester Amante, Cris Arre, Gaje Dacena, Alden Mella, Rhen Mesmonides, Pierre Patrick and Py Zuluaga present "Maximum Tolerance," on 14 Sept. 15 at the Iloilo Museum, 25, Mabini Valley Subdivision, Jaro, Iloilo City. The curatorial notes read: "Maximum Tolerance is the highest degree to which one is allowed to express one's belief. The premise of Maximum Tolerance is very valuable in order to prevent chaos and violence." Call 397 (0936745).

"UNTITLED," by Rhen Patrick

Magno at Cubicle

The Cubicle Art Gallery (4/L, E. Rodriguez Ave., corner Biela Main Ave., Pasig City, Metro Manila) presents "Refined Delusions," recent works by Angelo Magno, until Sept. 8. The exhibit according to Magno, investigates how we rationalize and model artificial objects are integrated.

Robles at Galleria Duemila

Roberto Robles presents "Wrestling with Stones" at Galleria Duemila, 2 El Lasing St., Pasay City. It was his correspondence with a poet he met abroad that inspired the title of his exhibit. He would entertain at the end of a letter, "I must get back and attend to my stones." Call 831-0000 and 833-0911.

"SOCIBOTTE," by Jovers Manalo, and "1000 Bliss Us," by Crisen Sipat

Art shows in Laguna

Several shows are slated from Aug. 25-Sept. 1 that the Museo de Kinabayan (3402, Lot Avenue, Alla Compan, Sta. Cruz, Laguna: "God Bless Boys," first solo exhibit of Cris Ward; "Memory and Amnesia," by multi-awarded young artists Jovan Mercio, Ronald Ramos Jr. and Jayson Serrano; "Kalinis," by Laguna artists; "Sensory Overload," by Los Piñas artists; and "Wrapping," by Manila-based artists. Call (049) 567-1362/63 or (049) 4536867.

Manga workshop at MET

The Metropolitan Museum of Manila holds a manga drawing workshop on Aug. 25, 1-5 p.m., at the White Cube Gallery. The workshop is co-facilitated by Mikhin Gallego, a member of Point Zero, a group of comic book artists in the Philippines. For registration, call 527-1517 or 527-1555.

ARTIST Toni Aurelio (with hat) opens "Ching Lobra," the show assembled of Abbo Llagas, Antonio Zuñiga and Angelito Narvaez, at the Ilaw Gallery in Nalle Verde 1 (Rizal and Kalaw Sts.). From left: Cerezo Maria Burgos, Aurelio, Maestro Hylander, Cleo Burgos, Isabel Esteban-Yik, Llagas, Grace Vinzon, Orrel Esteban-Yik.

BPI EXPRESS CREDIT
Anson's
Appliance Installment SHOWDOWN
AUG. 20 TO SEPT. 2, 2007
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The show of ancient images, prints, paintings and sculptures of the Santisimo Rosario kicks off the centennial of the canonical coronation of La Naval, the first Marian image in the Philippines to be crowned on papal order

POSTER of the Canonical Coronation of Virgen del Rosario de Otzaí

MODERN ico nofel of the Virgen del Rosario, from the collection of Museo de Sto. Domingo

JAN JEUS Del Rosario from Lucena, Quezon, from the collection of Bel Nicolas

IMAGE of Nuestra Señora del Rosario at UST parish church

Icons of Our Lady of Rosary on exhibit

THE FEAST OF SANTISIMO ROSARIO on the University of Santo Tomas campus will inaugurate a rosary exhibit on Sept. 8, to honor Mary on her nativity, an official Church feast.

UST parish priest Fr. James Skandis, OP says the exhibit will feature different images of the Sto. Rosario and unique rosary beads. An added feature will be a photo display of the Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval during her stay in UST for 13 years before it was brought to her shrine at the Sto. Domingo Church in the 1980s.

The venerated image of the La Naval was brought to the university campus on the night of Dec. 30, 1941, three days after the Church of Sto. Domingo in Intramuros was bombed by invading Japanese forces. The much-venerated image was left unharmed because it had been placed in a vault for safekeeping.

On Oct. 30, 1954, a Marian year, the was brought to her new shrine in Quezon City.

The exhibit was conceptualized and designed by Bel G. Nicolas of the Museo de Santo Domingo in Iglesia Dominga Church, Quezon City. Various prints, paintings and sculptures were borrowed from collectors

NUNA Sarmiento Rosario exhibit committee members: Tess Jovas, Jerome de Jesus, Neni Alquilos and Dino Marangan

FR. JAMES Skandis, OP, parish priest for UST and Bel Nicolas, curator

from Jovas, Jerome de Jesus, Neni Alquilos, Gino Marangan, Marcie Cuevas, Dr. Jojo Valencia, Jim Manalisay and Marian devotees from San Fernando, Pampanga and Quezon City.

A unique batik painting of the Santisimo del Rosario was commissioned from Bb. Lanka, courtesy of Fr. Napoleon Sipalay, OP.

The exposition, which was held Dec. 14, is part of the centennial celebration of the canonical coronation of La Naval and the UST parish fiesta, which falls on Oct. 7.

The centuries-old and history-ridden of La Naval was the first Marian image in the Philippines to be canonically crowned on the order of the pope in 1907.

Various activities for the exhibit were done by Rev. Jessie Tap, OP, James Patrick Jasing, and Peter Paul Nicolas.

Fr. Ernesto Arevo, OP, rector of UST, will open and bless the exhibit. He will be assisted by Fr. Herminio Dagohoy, OP, dean of the ecumenical ecclesiastics, as well as Ms. Maribeth Reg. Ma. Theresa Bercasio-David and Vice Mayor Iska Moreno.

St. Pius X Seminary of Roxas City marks golden jubilee

ST. PIUS X SEMINARY IN ROxas City will mark its golden jubilee year. On Aug. 31, with its tabletop Gerardus Gordon, cille of the Diocese of Capiz as main celebrant, the Capiz clergy and former seminarians and friends will hold a solemn Pontifical Mass in coincide with the feast of Saint Pius X.

Msgr. Wojciech Zelinski, charge d'affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature, will be the homilist.

For the hundreds of Nun alumni who went to high school or college there, the jubilee will be a very sentimental reunion. Priests, bishops and former seminarians—some coming from different parts of the Philippines and even from the United States—are expected to attend.

The seminary's first rector was the late Cardinal Sin (then Father Jaime Sin) when it opened in 1957. Former SPX seminary priests who eventually became bishops include Bishop Honesto Ongtioco of Sorsogon and Bishop Raul Martinez, among seminary alumni who became bishops are Bishop Pacifico Cajandig of Mindoro, Bishop Jose Advincula of San Carlos City and Bishop Cerferino Tobias of Romblon.

The former governors of Capiz and present Mayor of Roxas City Vicente Bermudez, is a seminary alumnus. Fr. Ernie Diaz, first Filipino pastor in the Archdiocese of New York and now director of the Chapel of the Lorenzo Ruiz in New York City, is a product of St. Pius X Seminary. He will attend the jubilee.

In New York, Father Diaz gathered the Capiznon and former students for a Mass of Thanksgiving last Aug. 5 at the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz in Lorenzo Manhattan in celebration of his alma mater's golden jubilee.

The three-day jubilee celebration in Roxas City began on Aug. 29 with a basketball tournament among the visiting alumni followed by socials, then a Solemn Mass officiated by Archbishop Gordoncillo.

Today at 4 p.m., there will be Vespers Mass to be officiated by Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, archbishop of Cebu. This will be followed by dinner and a program showcasing the 53 years of St. Pius X Seminary.

Finally, the Jubilee Mass will be held on Aug. 22 at 9 a.m. followed by the blessing of the Jubilee Door and the launching of the book on the history of the seminary.

For more information, call Fr. Ethel Delfin, rector of St. Pius X Seminary, at (036) 621-0403.

NEW BLANCO FAMILY MURAL "50 YEARS of Philippine General Hospital." A mural depicting the history of medicine in the Philippines has been unveiled as part of the PGH centennial anniversary. The mural is done by the Blanco family of artists of Angono, Rizal.

JOSE V. Blanco and family: Noel, Jun, Glenn, Jay, Lorina, Fleurjoni, Peter Paul, Michael and Gary

What are we to . . .

From page B1

pairing in the barbecue/red-and-breakfast program brings travelers into personal contact with the gentle Bohulanon culture.

Heritage houses glow differently when occupied. Their glow becomes warmer when they continue usefulness, as lodging houses, schools, offices, or for whatever purpose. They also glow better because they are wearing their keep.

Definitely with a glow that warms the heart is the Dauis convento in Bohol where, under a magnificently painted wooden cupola in the convento, a dozen of classic home of Bohol cuisine is served by local youth trained as cooks and waiters.

They serve the regional Binayd food of my youth in impeccable china and linen in unimpeachable customer surroundings, a great experience that combines tangible heritage (the splendid architecture of the convento) and intangible heritage (regional food, performances of traditional music).

Intangibles

The intangibles give life to heritage, connects heritage to people. Instead of the sites being lifeless and empty, think of the centers daily life adds to the two treasures, the heritage houses of Bacnotan, and the white elephant that would have been the Dauis convento.

In the three sites, heritage preservers become downright tourism, one of the more obvious uses for heritage-based resources.

The intangible, or the software, makes the heritage memorable. It is the stuff that makes for great tourism experiences.

It is the intangible that radiates life to a place, resurrects memories locals and their traditions.

The intangible is the "spirit of place" that makes the visitor aware of the local life, even if just be a few hours or days.

Think of the site viewers without inhabitants, the houses in Bacnotan empty, the convento in Dauis nonexistent or decrepit.

Then see the benefits from judicious use of their heritage resources for income-generation.

Heritage really should not produce more white elephants than we can handle. It should benefit people.

Bacnotan's bed-and-breakfast will be soon ready to receive visitors in the near future. Bookings are expected at Dauis convento, call (0921) 4643277 or (038) 502-2686.

E-mail the author at perak.pilces@gmail.com

18th-century dictionaries by friars to be launched as Pampanga gov't cites Augustinian legacy

THE PROVINCIAL BOARD OF PAMpanga has passed Resolution No. 945, which gives "due recognition and honor to the Augustinian missionaries for their pioneering efforts in Pampanga and for their role in the preservation of Kapampangan culture."

Thus, Pampanga has become the first province in the Philippines to officially thank the Spanish missionaries who labored in the country during colonial times.

The resolution, drafted by the Holy Angel University Center for Kapampangan Studies and sponsored by board members Carolina Bagtas and Raul Domingo, has been signed by the 30 provincial officials. Vice Governor Jonnifer Dalan, and approved by Gov. Eddie Panlilio.

A copy of the resolution will be presented to officials of the Augustinian Order and the Spanish Embassy on Aug. 24 in Intramuros, Manila, during the book launching of an 18th century Kapampangan dictionary published by OSU.

"This is a historic event because for the very first time in Philippine history, the country or at least one region in the country, thanked the Spanish missionaries for all the good things they did here," said Bobby Timbugan, director of the Center for Kapampangan Studies. "Notwithstanding the anti-friar sentiments which is not without basis, the friars, especially the ones assigned to Pampanga, deserve our gratitude as a people."

The resolution cited the Augustinians' merits in Pampanga such as their role in organizing towns and parishes, their construction of churches and their publication of dictionaries and other books, and their acts of charity during epidemics, calamities and wars.

The resolution made special mention of churches which have become "monuments of great historical and heritage value and testaments to the Kapampangans' ingenuity and fidelity to the Church."

Santiago said that the Spanish missionaries designed and supervised the building of the churches. "Kapampangans did not build temples like Hindu and Buddhist people in other parts of Southeast Asia did, but when the missionaries showed them how to build churches, Kapampangans combid themselves."

The resolution also mentioned the Kapampangan dictionaries and grammars that the missionaries wrote and published, "which have become sources of Kapampangan linguistic and ethnolinguistical information." Two such books, translated into English and published by HALI, will be launched on Aug. 24 at the Convento de San Agustin, the earliest house of the Augustinians in the country.

San Fernando Archbishop Paciano B. Aniceto and other Kapampangan bishops will concelebrate a Mass at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros prior to the book launching.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Secretaries on Filipino Affairs are sponsoring the launching with Holy Angel University.

Noted linguists and translation experts will give their reviews of the books, both authored by 18th century Augustinian missionary Frey Diego Bergaño, and translated by Kapampangan priests Fr. Venancio Samson and Fr. Ildefonso Santos.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lyka Ennia G. Yulario

JULIA'S NIECE Emma Roberts, Julia's niece and star of Nickelodeon's "Unfabulous," plays the title role in Warner Brothers' new teen comedy "Nancy Drew." She describes her new character as "nice, but nobody's fool."

INSIDE

- **The indie roundtable talks** Exclusive /F4
- **Docu on Bae tops Moonrise festival** /F2
- **Movie hits and misses** Viewfinder /F3
- **First all-Saudi music video exalts God** /G4

For funnyman Joey Marquez, hairless isn't something to laugh about. "I started losing my hair when I was about 35 years old," he recalls. "I was being called 'monsignor' because the bald spot on my head was increasing to the size of a monsignor's coat! You look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old! But I didn't want to wear a wig either. With the Svenson treatments, I got back my real, natural hair! It was thicker and healthier. It made me look absolutely younger! Svenson saved me from hairless!"

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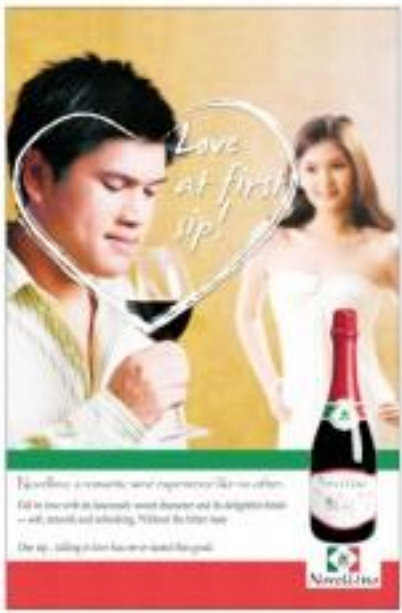

A totally inspired 'mockumentary'

NEW YORK—WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS now is not another penguin movie, it would seem, following the animated "Happy Feet" and the documentary "March of the Penguins." Indie Oscar winners, as well as the spoof "Farce of the Penguins" and movies like "Madagascar" in which penguins steal the show.

But "Surf's Up" is no different from its predecessors, and no different from the slew of animated films that have come out in the last couple of years, it's hard not to be dismayed.

The movie has a totally inspired vibe: It plays like a Christopher Guest-style mockumentary com-plete with deadpan humor, improvised dialogue and hand-held "camera work"—or rather, its CGI equivalent.

REVIEW

Great chemistry

In going behind the scenes at the Big Z Memorial Surf Off at Pen-Gu Island, directors and co-writers Chris Buck ("Tarzan") and Ash Brannon ("Toy Story 2") allow us to see a scene-in-the-dipping from the frame, or a shot that's out of focus. We hear off-camera interviewers (Buck and Brannon themselves) ask questions of their subjects and offer technical notes, and the sense that we're watching something truly spontaneous provides a giddy thrill.

Shia LaBeouf, however, deviates from the camera-loyal delivery you'd expect from the genre as the confident, laid-back rookie of Cody Maverick, a young surfer from Antarctica hoping to win the competition. He has great chemistry with Jeff Bridges as Lionel "Big Z" Topanga, the redwater retired legend who becomes his reluctant mentor. Both actors have remarked that they bounced off of

Knowing that we're watching something spontaneous makes us feel giddy

each other's energy, and it shows.

It helps that the penguins' characters are actually recorded their sessions at the same place and the same time, which is a rarity in animation. Usually an actor goes into a booth, records his or her lines alone, and then all the performances are edited together. But because LaBeouf, Bridges and other cast members were able to look at each other, react to each other, talk over each other, their interplay feels more realistic.

Kristy Swanhand is easygoing but likable, as always, as the surfer lifeguard who becomes the object of Cody's clumsy affections. James Woods is dead-on as the opportunistic surf promoter (with Mario Cantone as his egotistical assistant); and Jon Heder gets a couple of laughs as Cody's new buddy, Chicken Joe, the only surfer in the Midwestern town of Shoreopolis, Wisconsin.

Other likable touches include the great attention to detail in the sunshine and waves, the way the wind blows through the trees or penguin flippers leave prints in the sand. By now these are a given, considering the ever-improving technology that's available. Even more clever, though, is the animation-looking archive footage of old-school surfers, all faded and grainy, as if it really had been shot in 1964. There's also a great effect in which the supposed camera emerges from underneath a wave with droplets of water on the lens. Very cool.

Oh, so perhaps some themes in the script (also co-written by Don Rhymer and Christopher Jenkins) are a bit too familiar: Cody is an unknown underdog who, against all odds, finds himself at the heart of the competition alongside an arrogant reigning champion (Zeuhlich Nader). Big Z breaks him of his stubbornness and fierce independence and, in the process, becomes the father figure Cody never realized he needed. And Heder is reasonably doing yet another version of his clueless, mumbling Napoleon Dynamite character. (My problem could have done without him entirely.)

The fact that LaBeouf can read a line like, "Winners find a way to master value"—and not sound scary—is emblematic of what makes "Surf's Up" such an enjoyable ride. AP

NY fest heavy on US films

NEW YORK—THE NEW YORK FILM FESTIval announced the lineup for its 45th festival on Wednesday, unveiling a slate heavy on US films.

Among the directors bringing films to the festival: Sidney Lumet ("Before the Devil Knows You're Dead"), Noah Baumbach ("Margot at the Wedding"), Don Van Itzin ("Furnished Dark"), Brian Dalphin ("Redacted") and Todd Haynes ("I'm Not There"). John Landis ("Mr. Warmth, The Don Rickles Project"), Jon Stahn ("Married Life"), Julian Schnabel ("The Diving Bell and the Butterfly") and Abel Ferrara ("Go Go Tales") also will showcase their movies.

Wes Anderson's "The Darjeeling Limited" will open the festival, whose centerpiece is the Coen brothers' "No Country for Old Men."

The festival will run Sept. 28 to Dec. 14.

Sarajevo event

Meanwhile, The 13th annual Sarajevo Film Festival opened on Friday with 175 films from some 40 countries.

The nine-day fest kicked off with the world premiere of "It is Hard to be Nice" by Bosnian director Srdjan Vuletic.

The program includes sixteen more world premieres.

The festival was launched by a group of enthusiasts in 1995 during the three-and-a-half-year siege of Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb forces. Despite its troubled beginnings it has become the biggest such event in the Balkans. AP

WITNESS THE SPECTACULAR FINAL BATTLE UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE.
IN THE TRADITION OF '300' COMES ANOTHER HISTORICAL EPIC THAT DEPICTS THE COURAGE OF A FEW LEGIONNAIRES WHO FOUGHT AGAINST AN ARMY 5 TIMES BIGGER AND WON.

REPEAT VISITOR

Jovan Segay, Asian programmer of the Cannes International Film Festival Directors' Fortnight Section, visited the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran with his wife Eunsoon early this month. Segay was a juror in the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival in July. The couple also visited Intramuros and spent three days in Panglao, Bohol. "Jurors are for keeps coming back here because the people are so warm," said film producer Bobbit Tan, who sent us this photo.

$108,769,524
TOTAL BOX-OFFICE GROSS AS OF 08/13/2007
THE BIGGEST U.S. OPENING ON RECORD FOR A MUSICAL

Bae docu wins top fest prize

By Marinel R. Cruz

DOMINIC ANCHETA'S "LAWA NG BAE," a documentary on the state of Laguna de Bay, bagged the Grand Chaclie Award and awards prize of P100,000 at the third Mountain Film Festival, an ongoing cultural and environmental exhibition at the Subterranean Galleria in Shangri-la Plaza (SL).

Nine documentaries also across the country—from Mt. Pinatubo in the north to the Cordillera Island in Southern Tharpa—competed for the trophy that was handed out in an awards show on Aug. 16.

"Lawa ng Bae," which tells of the genesis and past problems of Laguna de Bay, as well as the richness and beauty of the neglected lake, also brought home the People's Choice and Best Editing awards. Plus, it received a citation for being "most heard."

Installation Tonee Bellmore was named Best Director for "Sa Ngalan ng Mina," about how politicians "sell" our natural resources to foreign companies.

Also given Best Cinematography was Ariel Nepomuceno for "Ambasan: An Island Under Siege," an investigative video documentary on the practice of blast fishing, over-population, extinction, livelihood on the island of Catalina, capped the Best Cinematography and Best Storytime trophies.

Ray Infante Olivadoti's "Pipoklog" based on a true tale by a fisherman on the island of Sarangy Quimarras about a mythical mermaid, a sea creature prepared to defend the integrity and beauty of its natural habitat, took home the Best Musical Score award. It was also bestowed as this year's Volunteer's Choice awardee.

Culture citation

The citation for Documentary on Culture was given to Goldie Mae Pitz-ongi's "Kalinod," a personal account of a young Ifalugao native who has acquired a scholarship as study at the University of Mabon.

The other films that participated in the competition are "Kamuhon: A Glimpse of the City of Pines" (Diane Elizabeth Sipin), "Sodong (Dance Duo)" (Seymour Baeza Sanchez), "Where have all the Monkeys Gone?" (Mabel Barong) and "Our World is Changing Climate," (Maria Ernestine Tenorio).

The Mountain Film fest aims not only to increase environmental awareness and to promote critical thinking, but also to expose the growing number of Filipino talents in documentary filmmaking.

The festival is organized by the Center for Environmental Awareness and Education (CEAE) in cooperation with Ford Education and Environmental Grants, with the help of the Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (IFC).

The CEAE is a non-profit organization that promotes environmental awareness and education through documentary film making and teacher training, among others.

After making the documentary "Children of the Mountains" in 2005, the CEAE decided to embark on creating the country's first ever environmental documentary film fest. By creating a venue, the CEAE hoped to encourage filmmakers to turn their cameras toward conservation and cultural issues.

Movie hits and misses

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ENCHANTED, HOME SICK NOW PLAYING and loud. Blow open in town, all of them hoping to crash viewers' fancy. Alas, the cinematic universe is at best an imperfect one, an only a few productions end up pleasing the public.

One movie that did hit the spot recently was the animated feature "Ratatouille." The comedy about rodent and kitchen clichés' with elements because of its inspiring story about a mouse and a snobbery slave who achieved their "impossible" dream of becoming acclaimed chefs.

Also hugely appealing was the film's visual look, which was as light and yummy as its theme and story.

The no-target channel-surfers of its principal protagonists and antagonists similarly made it easy for audiences to sympathize with them and care about how their individual stories ended.

Last on the up-and-up was "License to Wed," despite the fact that it had lackluster names like Robin Williams and Mandy Moore on its cast.

Cynical humor

The problem appeared to be the uncommonly negative and even sadistic treatment of Williams' character, a pastor who made it very hard for affianced couples to actually get married.

This was due to the fact that he required them to take a "course" to see if they were mature and prepared enough to become good spouses and parents.

The premise was sort of funny, but the tacom implemented it so rigorously that the potential fun flew out of the window. What was left was a lot of cynical humor and grueling pain.

Whatever happened to comedy's requisite lightness of touch? The answer lies sometimes felt like it was delivered by a sledgehammer.

Williams is usually a droll performer, but he came off overzealously in this production. So, his character onset, and, but Mandy and Jon Heder were put through too much of a wringer for humor to survive.

Fun trip

As for "Hush Hour 3," it has Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker trying to unmask the world's top crime bosses, and their mission takes them all the way up the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

It's a fun trip enlivened by many chase and fight sequences that are stylishly "choreographed." After a while, however, all that jumping and running around end up as no more than hustle.

Still, the comedic rapport between Chan and Tucker is delightful to behold, and helps keep their new movie downright even when its fight scenes end up spoiling endvalue.

Tucker's jivey performance style makes Chan come off in comparison as an Asian nerdmeldpoint. But Chan makes up for the shark in the film's entertaining Eiffel Tower "martial-acrobatics" sequences, where his signature death-defying stunts are showcased.

True again, the finale eventually feels stretched out, but it has enough cracking momentum to end more with a bang than a whimper.

No contest

Let's end with a critical hit: "The Lookout" is a gripping crime drama about a mentally impaired young hero (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) caught up by guilt, free becoming an easy prey for a gang of bank robbers who convince him to allow them to rob the bank where he works on a night janitor.

The protagonist's pitiful vulnerability makes the story look like a no-contest situation, but it suits on an upbeat note, as it doesn't bore despite its many maquettes, the former spoon how learns to fight back—and in contest an even bigger shit in his community's eyes.

The storytelling is taut and acutely realistic, but the movie's best suit is Gordon-Levitt's portrayal of its flawed protagonist. He moves across like a young Ronnie Reeves completely up to the many dramatic challenges his complicated character at him.

How hearing-impaired is a means of trauma, an unheralded actor like Joseph Gordon-Levitt can turn out to be an unpredictable.

DID YOU KNOW...

Independent by Nature award

ASPEN, Colorado—Actress Julie Christie will receive the Independent by Nature Award at the 2008 annual Aspen Filmfest next month, for "its distribution and creative risk-taking." Previous recipients include Harrison Ford, Michael Douglas, Angelica Huston and William H. Macy. AP

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AT THE MALLS

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Ayala Center Cebu: Cyborg Kinds, August 9 to 30, 2007 at the APEC Access

Market! Market!: Jiggle Superstar, August 18, 2007 at the Activity Center

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Guess who has to build it?

Steve CARELL Morgan FREEMAN

Evan ALMIGHTY

From the Director of BRUCE ALMIGHTY

IN THEATERS AUG. 22

ENTERTAINMENT

The indie roundtable talks

THE FILIPINO FILM industry may still be struggling after all these years, but a new movement has vigorously made itself felt.

Independent filmmaking, or making movies without the financial resources of a big company, is the bright alternative that has produced a growing number of critically-lauded works by young idealists driven by a desire to tell fresh and unique stories.

Two of these rising lights, Aureus Solito and Jim Libiran, wished the impetus to actively to take part in a roundtable discussion on the lively Pinoy indie film scene.

Int'l acclaim

Solito earned acclaim as director of "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," a film about friendship between a policeman and an adolescent gay that won Best Feature Film and Best Picture awards in several international festivals, notably in Berlin, Montreal, Toronto and Singapore.

"Pagdadalaga" holds the distinction of being one of the first local digital films released to 2005 that did well at the box office.

Solito's latest film, "Tuos," a semi-autobiographical tribute to his alma mater, Philippine Science High School, won for him the Best Director award in the recent Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Palanca winner

Libiran earned "Tribu," his Palanca-winning script about the street gangs of Tondo, into a full-length film which won Best Picture and Best Actor awards also for Cinemalaya.

"Tribu" likewise won for its cast of real-life gang members the Best Actor trophy in the Cinemalaya Film Festival.

At the roundtable talks, Solito spoke of the importance of going back to one's roots and fully knowing one's subject to making a film. He also discussed the difficulty of explaining what Philippine cinema is during his travels as a filmmaker to international film fests.

Libiran hated the hardships of running short on funds while shooting "Tribu," as well the current problem of distributing his film.

Both men expressed hope and optimism about they're doing something right.

Three questions

The roundtable participants were asked to answer three questions: 1) What am I doing right; 2) How am I doing it; and 3) How can I do better.

Apart from Solito and Libiran, the discussants were filmmaker-Dream Layaoen, writers Gino Portes, Cherry Pie Picache and Jimmy Salvacruz, and post production specialists David Zuzuta and Aileenen Guevara.

We start here with the interview with Solito, who talked about his views on the state of Philippine cinema, and his thoughts on the art of filmmaking.

AUREUS SOLITO

'Ang hirap i-explain sa foreigners kung ano ang Philippine cinema. Lagi ko silang pinagsasabihan na pwede itong iba sa alam nila'

JIM LIBIRAN

Aureus Solito: Tell stories that you understand

"Among the many film festivals I attended last year, my favorite is the (nonfiCTIVE Film Festival, which is for independent cinematheques. I have to digress: Pahawakan blood.

"In that festival, I got some of the best reactions, very sincere reactions, to my films, 'Banal Bumar' (my first documentary on Pahawan), 'Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros,' and 'Tuos.' I'm trying to follow the path of my mentors. When I was doing 'Banal Bumar,' I asked my mentor to translate Pahawanen documentaries for me. I couldn't understand the language because I had grown up in the US.

'Ano ang nararandaan ko? Lamad! also in Batipuhan. In Cipo Grove, Sampaloc, Manila, kasama ang mga cipo, mga tindera. Hanggang ka kung pa'no magkaroon ka kung pa'no ka nagsimula, pa'no ka interesado sa isang subject, tapos kung saan ka nanood ng mga pelikula noong high school."

The right way

"Minsan lumayo ka ang sa sa ng ating mga sinasabi at hahila ka ng mga kabataan. At minsan din, dumaan ako sa mga lugar na hindi kanaisang nakikita ng tao. Dumaan din ako sa pagiging scholar ng Philippine Science High School.

"Ano ba ang tamang pamaan ng pagpapasa ng pelikula? Hindi'o ang tamang paraan ay 'yung sabihin ito ang nararandaan mo. Hanggang sa pinanggagalingan mo. Hanggang sa ang kinalalagyan mo.

"The danger in attending film festivals abroad is, you get spoiled. You get to see more films that are being accepted internationally and you say, 'Ito yung mga style na dapat gawin.'

"Ang hirap i-explain sa foreigners kung ano ang Philippine cinema. Pinapaki nilang gawin dapat ang Philippine cinema. Lagi ko silang pinagsasabihan na pwede ng ating kulipetsan, at pwede ring iba sa alam nila.

"Nung nagtanong sila ang 'Pinay,' akala nila fiction, because they couldn't believe there is actually a Philippine Science High School. They said, 'Oh, it's a real school!'

"Maglo-lolo nuve. Magtatanong tayo. Sila'ye have to do great cinema, hopefully. Wala ga tayo sa kalinglasan ng mga love team gawin. Marami pa tayong maitatanong nuo mga mga."

Jim Libiran: The Norn Aunor dream is still the Filipino dream

"I think gamitin ren ang ak nasimat ng chong nimal: si Cin emadaya. Her thoughts 'nevd ke gawin a lot of money to do our films. At least, magsiguro ka lang, out some comers, kinda pala. Ang pinjawad budgeting 'Tribu' was P1.7 million. Ang ate remember ha, PHALOOOO.

"From the milieum in the whole Cinemalaya experiment teacher ren that you have to be very good as craft me, and at the same time realize that your craft is also a business. Because ala gawa-gawin ka ornen nun? Mangatong kami. Yung the way producer si lihad. Actually, 'yung producer ke si lihad, nanalo sa kickstarter.

"Dito ro ara building a new industry. Ang nanalo ng ating mga mga ng old industry na nakakay sa mangahan."

No-head

"In the middle of doing my film, biyahapon kami sa pero, 'yung pagkain. Ganu kasi 'yung schedule ng kalan ng cadre. Pati everytime you close, kailan gan mong gumawa. Magpa-pahain ka ng tao, pero-ano ng mga ito. Sa 18 years of experience ako sa showbiz pati ako sa mga sinehan ko sa kaka-ro ang mga ilang ng depaya sa mga HUDs, hindi namin naramasan

'TRIBU'

nawawang ito. 18 a.m., nagsisimula kami. But before that, I had spent long gang 6 a.m. in Medspa at Frondster e-mail ang people. Meron along naka-chat. Saga New Jersey pala. At now ako nakakwentang si CGF.

"Dedicate ko na ngayon sa mga universities at Baguio, Davao, Cebu, Iloilo na. Wanna kang kinal ng MTRCB pero, hindi nako-nakakuha sa mahk.' Ang sagot sa akin, 'Sirs ko kayo sa universities ninggan palabas.'"

The target

"Ang target talaga ng 'Tribu' ay 'yung mga bin di nakapanood sa sinehan. Kaya nakita ng mga Lapu-Tondo at 'yung ibang mga hip-hop at hindi nakapanood sa sinehan. Iba'ng sino akong binigyan ng CD ng mga mga Tondo, gangster rap, pinagbigay ko sa iyo ito nung nakaraan. Pag during ko sa sinaglit, 'yung dadasung kasa na nagtatrabaho ng kanyan com-shop ng rap.

"Nagsasalita ko kay Bapang Landrew noong Manila Reggae Summit, sabi ko, 'Bapang, ayaw kong nakikitang nanood kasi tagpas ka e.' Pero sabi ni Bapang, 'Sa Davao, merong seven years old na pinalo hahahahaan ko. Marong pumalong ikatlong ng pangkin, mag-six nap ako sa dampa no.'

"Ang dasung nung nagsasalita na gamit pala 'yung rap sa Tondo. Akmala pa dang ko 'yan. Ibig rappers have been dreaming and so much panel poetry ka nanonga sila. Ayu siyang mink ko pa lang. Isumbat no

HAYDEN Lopez as Maximo Oliveros

ilmal ko akam kung ano ang nagkakaiyo' at dinat pag nagkakaiyo kami' on promotions, pero cinaibohan na ako ng mga mga kagaya. Gabi wala. Ang mga hip-hop alna mahi-nagsa-mayamon.

Mary Tondos

From Steve hanggang dinat sa mga mga-features sa Bagan.'

"Sabi ko, 'Bagan na hip-hop, dang. Alam yan di ba?' 'Sus ang inilol ne namin. Ewa ang pati-tandam nanon, manonong Tondo-ta mando.

'Ang kanyaje nga, parang Balagtas, Ang aking tapic ang dapat na, ito ang tibi. Ibi nga ni Jim Aureo. Ito ang pinoy ng Balagtas-ta! mapanood ng mga 'Tribu,' noong siya 'yung mga batang mag-rap at hip-hoppin' sa harap niya sa isang topic na dungay niya na napakahirap. Sabi niya, 'Kumala ka nga sito tungkol sa dito.' At isa ka banyo ng amin na bata. Sabi ni 'Yes, ibig kapal ko pala.'

"Tone hundred seventy per minute. And to think na high school dropouts sila. Una-na-rend sila at 10th quarter ng isang pantry class. Ang nakakabaliw, sila mga mga-ca. Sobra. Mahirap. Aaware. And the Tondo boys are at the top of their class. Hindi na sa akin nanggagaling 'yun. Ang mismo na magsasabi sa kanya at hindi great ang isang teacher.

(On Wednesday: Indie actors.)

'FRIDAY'

ENTERTAINMENT

JENNIFER Aniston SCARLETT Johansson DREW Barrymore

CASTING COUP

LOS ANGELES—Scarlett Johansson is set to join Jennifer Aniston and Drew Barrymore in a rom-romantic comedy, entertainment press reported on Friday. Shooting on the film, "He's Just Not That Into You" gets underway towards the end of the year, according to the Hollywood Reporter. Johansson, 22, will play a yoga instructor embroiled in an affair with a married man, echoing her role in Woody Allen's drama "Match Point" in 2005. —AP

Singing champ comes home

CITY OF MALOLOS—BULACAN: Residents and officials welcomed home last week an 11-year-old girl from this city who topped the junior division in the World Championships of Performing Arts (WCOPA) held recently at the Wurtz Beaver-ton Hotel in Los Angeles, California.

Ana Danielle Clemente bested 5,000 contestants from 52 countries.

3 medals

The Grade 6 pupil of Stella Maris Academy bore also bagged the "Entertainer of the World" award, junior category, and "Vocalist of the World" honors.

Ana reached the finals after ensuring five contests and plaques as the two-month of the competition. Her winning pieces: "I Believe I Can Fly" (pop category), "Don't Pass Us My Parade" (Broadway), "Mas Que Nada" (Latin), and "Some

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Something 'never fails' to make this ree

From "Chi" (yowlthedancybabe@hotmail.com), Quezon City:

The Entertainment Roundup never fails to make me laugh! It's one of the things that I look forward to every Sunday apart from Mel and Jessie Inquirer. Yes I still read it. I am 20 years old, but I've been a .ff baby since fourth grade.

Anyway, what I like about Roundup is the frankness. Parang 'yung dinadaing na dapat malaman ng readers about show biz issues. The fun part is the side comments that you guys add to the tabloid headlines. Ang kulit nga. Ike nga ng isang leaguey sports, "Sila-bela-kasi." :) Kabuhay-haba ang kwentuan naming mga readers. Magaling, ma- (Eh, sana ma- ng yo!)

I love Juli

From Ava F
Sun (6963, 6
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never breach
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many years
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Antonio Fern

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From Cam
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(cam.te_sta
@hotmail.c
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ENTERTAINMENT

If anyone can cook, anyone can sing

By Pocholo Concepcion

PAUL POTTS NEVER SAID IT SO GOOD.

Days after winning in Simon Cowell's new search-for-a-star show, "Britain's Got Talent," the 37-year-old singer was in the studio recording his debut album.

Potts was given a free hand on the choice of songs. He even had the London Symphony Orchestra to back him up. But the album, "One Chance" (Sony BMG), doesn't sound rushed or unpolished as Potts' newfound fame. Not at all.

His preferred music, in the first place, is classical. Prior to his victory, Potts was a member of an amateur opera company for which he had rendered a number of stage performances. He had also taken opera singing lessons in Italy where he was chosen as one of the best students and made to perform—with Luciano Pavarotti in the audience.

Review

Audition piece

The material in "One Chance" consists mostly of opera classics. "Nessun Dorma," which opens the album, is from Puccini's "Turandot." It was from audition piece for Britain's Got Talent," which he also sang in the finals. Securing fame for the first time on CD, it's not difficult to understand why Cowell and the TV audience were reportedly moved to tears.

Never mind if all the songs are in Italian. Likewise, it's not important to know whether Potts is a tenor or what kind of operatic singing style he employs. Because in the second track, "Time to Say Goodbye" ("Con Te Partiro"), the sensitive power of his voice, enhanced by the orchestration mood-inducing accompaniment, captivates precisely what the song is trying to convey—the ambient of parting ways.

Potts' other choices in his 14-track CD is pretty interesting. "Nessuno," though it sounds like staple opera stuff, was a number one pop tune covered by the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra in the 1940s. What probably caught Potts' attention was its instrumental version in the film "Once Upon A Time in America."

Biggest surprise

The most surprising is Potts' Italian version of "Everybody Hurts"—one of several hits from REM's "Automatic for the People" album. Although it's no big deal these days for opera singers to cover pop songs, this one's a choice that connects with the material's youthful sentiment (teenage rebellion).

The rest of the lineup may be considered a good way to persuade both opera and non-opera fans that Potts' talent is formidable and not accessible.

Most inspiring

A day or less of listening to "Caruso" (about the famous Italian tenor and a favorite piece of Pavarotti), "Nella Fantasia" (from the film "The Mission"), "Non Piu Andrai" (popularized by Josh Groban), "My Way" (yes, in operatic version of the karaoke standard here), "Lascerai" and "Music of the Night" (from "Phantom of the Opera") can heighten one's mood and rekindle interest in the finer things in life. (Destroy, of course, if one had the time and money to study Italian.)

PAUL POTTS

© ARTCORE 02

Star-studded sendoff

HERV GRIFFIN in May 2007 file photo.

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA—Merv Griffin, who entertained generations as a singer, talk show host and the creator of such TV game shows as "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune," was fondly remembered by Hollywood stars at his funeral.

Among the mourners Friday were former US first lady Nancy Reagan, game show hosts Pat Sajak, Vanna White and Alex Trebek, actor Dick Van Dyke and Griffin's son, Anthony, and his family.

Griffin was 82 when he died Sunday of prostate cancer.

AP

ALEX TREBECK of "Jeopardy!"

ACTRESS Bo Derek

FORMER first lady Nancy Reagan leaves the funeral.

ROSIE O'DONNELL (left), Portia de Rossi and Ellen DeGeneres.

VANNA WHITE

MERV Leon Tong right, with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and wife Maria Shriver.

ACTOR Dick Van Dyke and actor-producer Carl Reiner.

1st all-Saudi music video

And the unusual message is: You can be cool and devout

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—The Arab world's hugely popular music video industry often features sexy performers in revealing clothes or dancing almost love.

But the first clip to be locally produced in Saudi Arabia has a message of a different kind: You can be cool and devout.

The video is unusual, made in a country where the religious establishment considers music un-Islamic and bans it in public places. And the entire star in the video is Saudi—a young crooning icon in a week positioned inside the kingdom.

But in a sign of Saudi impatience with the restrictions, "Malak Ghair Allah (You Only Have God to Count On)" was a hit when it was launched at a popular mall in the western suburb of Jeddah last week. Hundreds of people showed up to watch it on a giant screen.

Tears

"People wouldn't stop clapping. Some had tears in their eyes," Rasheed al-Khalifa, the director, told The Associated Press.

The video is expected to air on most of the Middle East's more than 30 music satellite TV channels this week, despite fears among the Saudi clergy over the corrupting influence of music videos, the clip had implicit government approval. The producers shared "whose name helped make this work a success," including the Information Ministry.

"This Only Have God to Count On" uses upbeat music to tell the story of a successful man who had strayed from the path of true Islam. He smokes, flirts with women even though he's engaged and doesn't join his colleagues at work in performing the five daily Muslim prayers.

The star

Things slowly start to go bad: he has a flat tire and problems at work and his fiancé leaves him when she sees him talking to another woman. He then has a serious accident while recklessly driving his motorcycle. After he recovers, the man starts to pray, stops smoking, wins back his fiancé and excels at work.

Significantly, the man, played by Saudi Abd al-Majeed, a tall, fit devout, poor medical student sporting a big goatee, doesn't grow the big, bushy beard favored by fundamentalist Muslims. He still wears Velcro and jeans and sticks to his old friends, including a man who favors the much-frowned-upon ponytails.

"I assured the youths to understand that it's not the looks that count, it's rather inside that matters," al-Khalifa said. "The video also has this message: 'Don't give up and think, 'I sinned, therefore I'm going to hell.' Think that there's a God and he is always there to help you."

Al-Khalifa, 37, who heads an advertising agency, has previously produced music videos, but this is the first that is an all-Saudi work.

AP

DIRECTOR Rasheed al-Khalifa, right, works on the music video "The Only Have God to Count On."

Rock band tries to heal Kashmir youth's wounds

SRINAGAR, INDIA—THE SOUND OF A new rock band is soothing Kashmir, which has been blighted by years of violence and a ban on entertainment by separatist Muslim guerrillas.

In a region where the boom of guns and bombs has drowned out all sounds for almost 20 years, a cacophony of melodies from guitars, drums and electric keyboards is now sweeping Kashmir's war-weary youngsters with a message of love and peace.

"Immersion," a five-member rock band that also includes a woman, says the purpose of its music is to try to erase the scars and traumas of young Kashmiris.

"They have suffered a lot and they are hungry for entertainment," Anis Wandoo, the band's 28-year-old lyricist, told Reuters. "We are trying to heal their wounds."

The band initially faced threats, but accompanying a riff in violence-torn town people invited their shows. Last month, hundreds of youths cramped to the band's music. One of the songs said: "We pray to God for a soothing turn of happiness."

Encouraged by the response, the multilingual band—which performs in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi—hopes to turn professional soon. The band members combined always to harmonize during solo jobs.

King Paul, lead guitarist, has a favorite song—"Will change the picture of the world, see the youngsters of Kashmir."

Reuters

South Border front liners quit

FROM JOY, PAUL, DUTCH, Rick and Tina of South Border, we received an e-mail announcing that front liners Duncan Barnes and Vince Alonso have quit the group. We reprint relevant parts here:

"This year, South Border celebrated its 16th year anniversary and we ... extend our utmost gratitude to those who have been by our side from the day we released our very first album in 1998.

"Everything does happen for a reason—and [that] we announce the departure of Duncan Barnes and Vince Alonso as front liners.

"The opposition was not an ugly one. We [still remain] friends and hold our member in great esteem. Our creative minds have merely ceased to merge as one.

"Duncan and Vince have decided to move on. We thank them for their contributions and we will miss performing with them onstage. We have decided to take our creative energies in a [different] direction.

"We look forward to new and exciting things ahead. We are currently finishing [a new] album due for release [late] this year or early next year. Expect fresh concerts and other activities. Things are in full speed ahead. Feel free to check [for] updates via www.southborder.net or www.myspace.com/southborderband. Thanks again."